

DIY tips
from 93 folks
like you!



SPECIAL READER-CREATED ISSUE!

This Old House

See
America's
BEST
REMODEL
inside

p. 66

35 Real-Life Redos

9 charming
cottage
kitchens

8 relaxing
bedrooms
and baths

9 crazy
ways to save

AWARD-
WINNING
FRONT
PORCH
p. 74

PLUS!
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UPGRADE p. 55



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- 9 **your true colors.** The raved honeycomb sand in your remodel
- 66 **homes at last.** The grand-prize winners—award-winner Christopher Morris and Page Staudt—share theirakaholic-style year in review
- 74 **one-room wonders.** Five fabulous kitchens that stand-out from the crowd
- 86 **the mosaic awards.** Meet the 10 Mosaic winners, part the profit to the author and education administrator

idea file

- 32 **pregnancy timeline.** How a baby's the day never goes the same
- 39 **great adaptations.** Seven homeowners put their personal stamp on projects they saw in the pages of TOH
- 55 **homes smart home.** One family's wild experiment with app-controlled devices
- 66 **money-savers.**
- 68 **fat-wallet awards.** Nine creative penny pinchers whose ideas will inspire your inner cheapskate
- 82 **readers' tips.** Word-of-mouth DIY tips in the words behind these ingenious household ideas

TOH QUARTERLY 2013
ISSUE NUMBER 120 | OCTOBER 2013 | THEOLDHOUSE.COM

Contents

THIS OLD HOUSE OCTOBER 2013

Inside, you'll find the stories of the creative
and determined DIYers below—and
those of many others who entered our
Search for America's Best Remodel Contest



Contents THIS OLD HOUSE OCTOBER 2015



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On the cover



1-9 42
4-9 11 28-48 66 77
1-9 11 20 40 65 74
pp. 31 23 23 29 39
47 49 59 74 76

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MICHAEL T. WILHELM
Styling by NARIA MURRAY

Photo © iStockphoto.com
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25

SHOWING



55
SMART HOME

home solutions

28 **Shoelaces** are transformed from lace to twine to make a past-tense dust collector, DIY outdoor rug, a garment storage for pastel-colored fabrics, clever rams for vintage clothing and more.

TOH TV

25 **the things they saved**
An Apple core, fibreglass insulation and more objects become a Queen Anne's Dining

upgrades

23 **get this look for less**
They look like designer finds

25 **shopping**
Heidi esp.

how-to projects

23 **paint ideas** Create textured, damask pattern wall covering with cutout pens

29 **landscaping**
A Sedona landscape designer layers rocks in stepped, circular allées to create a

45 **weekend remodel**
Padova a vintage dresser into a style fit for Dorothy Norm. Alice shows you how

ask this old house

89 **Q+A** Grouseboards with a gash, phone line, winter home for a pair of hydrants, getting the stink from a leaky oil P-trap, reusing a red exterior door, preexisting studs support for a porch, recognizable more

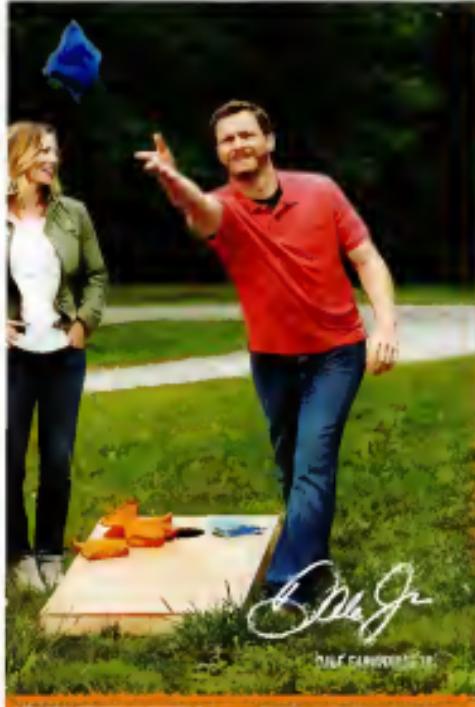
IN EVERY ISSUE
5 Interview This Old House
66 directory
104 user@oldhouse

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Letter

FROM THE OLD HOUSE

I gotta say, you people are nuts!

I'm nice to know I'll have friends in the nuthouse.

Maybe not all of you will be there, but let's be honest: The level of crazy in the status quo isn't far from eighth-grade Wrangler-Created Issue in its impressive in the home-improvement work you've done.

Steve, from DIY parents those folks from a ladder, nearly electrocuted myself, charred my shirt, lost the nail on my great toe, crooked my arm out of my torso, and spent time in the lockup for an inappropriate relationship with a computer.

But you people have let the remedial disease creep into the gray water in ways that impress even me.

Some come normal. I don't go and buy average woods a crowning bori while on vacation because they know how someone else makes a vacation. And Bill Kevitt and Miss Matilda did, unfriendly face their hardwork on page 15. I mean this kindly, but you need a lone screw (3-inch, coarse-thread, drywall, perhaps) to do that.

And when a cause is being afraid of heights or being afraid of heights but letting your headband strap you to a senior lift, you can just the top story of your house because you're "determined," as Dale Stevens' "Daring wall" in another world, that's right past his C&T episode. But I think you what's reasonable: getting up in the dark before work, putting on a headband, and grabbing a shovel to plant shrubs. The looking of you, Dreyfus Green, and something. Who does that kind of grave robbery?

To be honest, maybe the single sensible thing I heard from you guys was Kim Gothic's opinion of not putting the dishes on her place unless weight loss requires. Congrats on dropping 20, Kim! Otherwise, D&T demands a walkathon this year, from those of you who were hospitalized (only to be back at the project days later) to the expectant mom who labored on their remedial labor located in

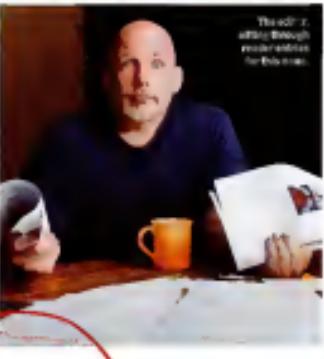
Our we agree that the lot of you are just not right in the head, and the place you call home and your family—and, because you've shared your stories with us, the larger family of TEAM fuzzy—are better for it? We can, and wouldn't want it any other way.

So thank you, and I'll see you in the padded room. I don't know what we'll do there probably won't be any DIY, house-which-commits-to-hanging sheep looks or even bennies! But we can trade stories. Or we can bennies. Yeah, we've bennies! I do not of furniture and maybe even the house in paragraph...—

Until then, check out the whole-house women of this year's Search for America's Best Remodel. They and the one-room remodelers that follow are proof that getting your hands dirty—and, yes, being a little off-balance—can yield truly amazing results.


SCOTT OMELIANUK, EDITOR
scott@thousend.com

 Get your own
tale of crazy?
Please share your
stories of renovation DIY
with me on Twitter
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using #THOTCIL





Your true colors

THE OLD HOUSE | OCTOBER 2015

Color was a big theme in our *Search for America's Best Remodel*. Here's a kaleidoscopic picture of how you made use of it

KITCHEN-WALL FAVORITES



BATHROOM WALLS, IN ORDER OF POPULARITY



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They upcycled a factory cart

As soon as Emily Danforth and Erica Idell of Providence, Rhode Island, saw this old mill cart, they knew it would make a perfect kitchen island for their 1900 Gothic Revival home. "Much of our renovation was inspired by our desire to repurpose funky vintage items," says Emily. "We love the cart's rustic, industrial look and striking green paint."

To get the lowdown on this and other "From this to that" reader transformations, turn the page. →

Touch is on. Touch is off. With Delta's Touch2O Technology, simply tap anywhere on the spout or handle of the faucet to start and stop the flow of water. Learn more about these innovative fixtures for your kitchen and bath at deltafaucet.com/touch.

Edited by Michelle Brunner

From this to that

FACTORY CART → KITCHEN ISLAND

The same day we spied this old mill cart at a salvage shop, we found a slab of perfectly suitable marble in a nearby antiques showroom. We knew we could make the perfect top. We cut down the handles to bring the cart's workstation height and laid salvaged floorboards across it to create a base to support the marble. Then we drilled through the marble and inserted dowels to match the handle so it looks like the marble was always there. Now the island is the hub of our home.*

Emily Danforth and Eric Estell
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND



ORGAN PIPES → FEATURE WALL


When we found five truckloads of solid-pine church organ pipes destined for the burn pile, we had to reuse them. After removing a bench from the basement in our workshop, we used the heavy-timber legs to create a platform for a slender, inspired, rustic wall-unit/mantel, accented with salvaged stone tiles.*

John and Ken Karr
PLYMOUTH, INDIANA



DOORS → DAYBED


I had been searching high and low for a queen-size daybed for the guest room of my 1929 Tudor. Finally, I decided to build it myself. I got two solid-wood doors from the Habitat for Humanity ReStores and cut one to fit the windowless corner of the room. I fashioned 2x4s to the doors and converted them to a matching frame. The finishing touch? A coat of bright green paint.*

Karen Cooper
DECATUR, GEORGIA



GRAND PIANO → KITCHEN ISLAND


When we downsized our home, we didn't have space for our out-of-commission 1,024-square-foot piano. Karen, a painter, came up with the idea to make it into a desk. We pulled out the piano's working soundboard and keys and removed the legs (saved for a future project), then added a base and a pedestal to support the stone countertop.

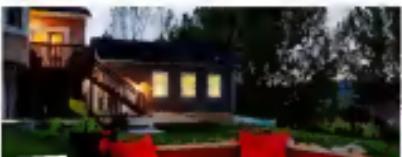
Gary and Karen Thompson
FORT THOMAS, KENTUCKY



WOODEN BOAT → GUEST BED


The sleek, tanning boat was a find at a estate auction while driving home from a vacation house in Old Forge, New York. We spent nine long, sweltering Penns. days Lapstrake to saw the side off the road to 1500 and cut it off the back. And built a simple box frame for the mattress. As projects go, it wasn't fancy, but now it's where all our guests want to sleep.

Kevin and Mia Madoc
SCOTTSDVILLE, PINEYVILLE, VIRGINIA



TRAMPOLINE PIT → OUTDOOR LOUNGE


After 20 years of trying to extract this concrete-block wall from the ground to make a trampoline pit behind our new house, I had a better idea: Turn it into a cozy hangout space. First, I cleared the walls with Zilla, then I built out the benches. I piled the rocks and gravel and installed a fire pit. One thing's for sure: Our family has gone through lots of late-night movies out there.*

Douglas Larson
SALT LAKE CITY



Save here, splurge there

A little penny pinching can pay off big. Just ask these savvy readers, who found a way to afford some bigger-ticket items in their remodels without breaking the bank. Read on to learn how they did it. —KATHLEEN L.



SPLURGE Custom cabinetry cost \$31,582



HOW SHE SAVED
We wanted custom cabinetry to complement the look of our 2003 home. We knew we were only going to do this once, so we did it better than we ever had before. We saved money by recruiting friends and family to install a support beam and remove old brickwork. In return for their labor, we compensated them with their projects.

SPLURGE Quartzite countertops cost \$5,670



HOW SHE SAVED
"Stone design elements are becoming more and more important on the walls and cabinet pulls—but we knew that the cost of quartzite needed to last for a long time. We decided on quartzite. To save money, we kept our existing cabinetry and modified it to fit the new floor plan. We also bought floor models for the oven and range.

Margaret Sturzke ROGERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

SPLURGE Kitchen island cost \$7,059



HOW THEY SAVED
"We built the island of our dreams with a granite-countertop top. Jason did the kitchen demolition, which cost us thousands."

Jason and Shannon Perrone WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

SPLURGE Hand-crafted tiles cost \$3,200



HOW SHE SAVED
We wanted tile from Heath Ceramics for the bathtubs in our Craftsman bungalow, but they were over our budget, so we selected other projects that we could afford them.

Heidi Schubert SALT LAKE CITY

SPLURGE Pro-style range cost \$5,099



HOW HE SAVED
As a chef, I wanted a lemon-odor range. I found the lowest price online and got a free ship. I matched it, so I didn't have to pay for delivery. I talk contacts on Facebook for advice, like how to hang a well. Then I do my research and give them a review on LinkedIn."

Dave Walker DUTON, NEW JERSEY

Dust-busting musts

When asked for the hardest part of a renovation, this October readers often answer: "Dust." Here, celebrity cleaning guru Jeff Mauro offers tips on how to breathe-easier post-renovation.

WIFE DOWN SURFACES: Pick up as much dust as you can (and knock the rest to the floor) by using a microfiber window wiper on walls and ceiling. For hard-to-clean places, like between the knobs of a pro range, use a dry, soft, flexible paintbrush, which removes wonders along base molding.

VACUUM EVERYWHERE: Run a HEPA-filter vacuum with a soft-bristle brush attachment over all surfaces. If you don't have one, or if you're renting the backpack model to avoid dragging it around and cleaning new floors,

FRESH WITH WATER: Wipe down every surface you can reach with a slightly damp, reusable microfiber cloth (except for flat, fresh walls and fabrics). If walls were recently painted, wait until the paint has cured (at least two weeks) before wiping with a damp cloth.



ILLUSTRATION: JEFF MAURO

DADS DON'T TAKE SICK DAYS.



DADS TAKE



THE THE
HORN-DROWSY NIGHTTIME
COUGHING, SNIFFLING,
ACHING, SNEEZING,
FEVER, COUGHING,
SORE THROAT, ACHING
STUFFY HEAD, FEVER,
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MEBODINE, MEBODINE.

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She put the party on wheels!

Katrina

Sullivan
SACRAMENTO,
CALIFORNIA

"This cart is such a hit with our guests. We use it all the time."

PM reader Katrina Sullivan knows to entertain a family on the patio of her 1900s ranch. She also knows her way around a tool kit, as shown on her *Smart chicklet house* over. So when she couldn't find an outdoor serving cart that was exactly what she wanted, she actually decided to build one herself, using stock lumber and her handy pocket-hole jig. To make it lookable, she added cutouts on one side and painted the legs of the cart using a miter saw. She painted the base of the cart, darkening the corners, and her "house" exterior, topped it with stained cherry boards, and added a nine-foot-long drawer pull on the side for a dish towel. (For the full how-to, go to tinyurl.com/oct2015.) Now she's got a cart that can dole out drinks, a beverage and food prep station. "We wind it out to serve drinks for birthday parties and use it as a buffet table for tea night," says Katrina. "It's a wonderful feeling to build something you use every day!"



TLC for painted wood floors

Ever since we showed how to paint a checkered or square-tile floor (11 months ago), *DIY* readers like Marla Fraschetti of Seattle have been inspired to follow suit—that is, her take it down. Here are a few dos and don'ts for keeping painted floors looking fresh. —HEATHER MCCORMICK

DON'T USE WATER Sealing a hardwood floor with water is a no-no, even if it's painted. Just add steam mops too; the moisture and heat can damage the finishboards.

DO DUST Plus remember: using a vacuum cleaner with an attachment that doesn't have a beater bar. For everyday cleaning, use a microfiber sweater. Push it in a circular motion, not back and forth. (Ground-in dust and oil will wear down a floor's finish, so the more you dust, the better.)

DON'T USE MAX Certain wax-based polishes can leave a hard residue; water-based cleaners can even strip your floor. Use a no-wax floor cleaner or a water-based polish instead.

DO TOUCH UP Say a dull or discolored spot? Lightly sand and retouch with paint. Finish with two coats of polyurethane that matches the sheen of the rest of the floor.

HE MAKES *tough messes* WISH THEY WERE NEVER MADE.



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They put a spin on tin

To appreciate the beauty of embossed metal tiles, you usually have to look up. Three clever maidens show how these vintage ceiling squares can shine in other parts of the house. —E.A.



Bath artwork "When I found one square tin panel at a salvage yard, I decided to make it the focal point of my bath. I carefully removed the bath through existing holes in the tile that lined up with the subway tile grout line. It is not like just hanging a picture."

Dorothy Helska
ELLIARD, NORTH CAROLINA



Kitchen backsplash "We found these patterns of these tiles that we found on eBay. To prevent them from being too shiny, we painted them with a clear spray lacquer. We wanted their edges to look like they would fit and mounted them in plywood with black sheet metal screws, then filled in around the tiles with wood trim."

Keith Strangfeld
BUFFALO, NEW YORK



Cabinet-door inserts "I swapped out the glass in my kitchen cabinet doors for vintage ceiling tiles from a hardware store. I had to cut to fit the designs centered in the existing cabinet doors and attached them behind with retaining clips. I sanded them and finished the panels with dark wax. They have clarity while preserving the rustic style of our laundry items."

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They made a farmhouse fresh

Items salvaged from old mills and barns become the floors, ceiling, and sheathing in this couple's rustic kitchen.

BY KATHRYN O'SHEA-EXKINS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY HEIDI LONG



Jeremiah and Felisha McAfee

Bigfork, Montana

"You can never throw away old stuff you've got."

WHEN THE McAFFEES BOUGHT this 1800s Montana farmhouse, they gutted every single surface down to the old, frayed wiring and rusty things they won. "We invested two years of a solid life and lots of sweat, but it was well worth it," Felisha says. The result? A wood-paneled passageway that evokes a farmhouse style, and on a shoestring budget, too. Jeremiah volunteered in a salvage yard to get wood (and the corrugated steel for the ceiling) for free. Felisha hand-painted old-fashioned signs. These DIY readers also scored their signs for minimal cost from the open shelving department. "We even found that stainless-steel facebowl sink at a garage sale for \$200," To get that down-home look in your own kitchen, read on.

glass gourds

"I inherited my gourds from a beloved family friend; they're my favorite dinner items," Felisha says. The hand-blown gourds (second from right) have instant heirloom potential. \$15 each. tinyurl.com/399gk7m



striped runner
A pastoral cotton rug brightens up dark salvaged flooring and adds texture underfoot. 2'9" by 9'6" rug, \$92. tinyurl.com/399gk7m



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEREMIAH AND FELISHA McAfee; RUG, TINYURL.COM/399gk7m; SINK, TINYURL.COM/399gk7m; SIGN, TINYURL.COM/399gk7m

Reader tip:
even the
dump can
yield
treasure

whitewashed island
Felisha found this 1930s pine sink in a store's antiques shop; this new one offers ample storage and a sturdy base. top: \$480; overstock.com



vintage tin
A common childhood memory needs to be kitchen icon of the past—and it's a great piece to stash coffee or tea. We bought this well-worn tin on eBay for \$10.



homespun signs
We purchased vintage barnacles from a Faribault designer and added a raggedy look here and there for a worn effect. tinyurl.com/399gk7m; tinyurl.com/399gk7m



colorful mixing bowls
Born red in a classic farmhouse look, apricot-colored ones fit perfectly in any home cook's book. \$39.99–\$7.99. tinyurl.com/399gk7m for stores

reclaimed-wood shelving

To create Jerimiah's farmhouse open shelves, we started with a nice piece of 10-ft.-long thick salvaged heart pine for the top. To build the simple bracket, we cut 1x3s to 40" and 90" lengths, then used glue and 2 1/2-in.-long wood screws to fasten it all together. Throughly sand the edges and a coat of stain gives themaged patina. ■



shapely pitchers
These throwback silhouettes add vintage charm. Ceramic pitchers, \$9.99 each. tinyurl.com/399gk7m for stores



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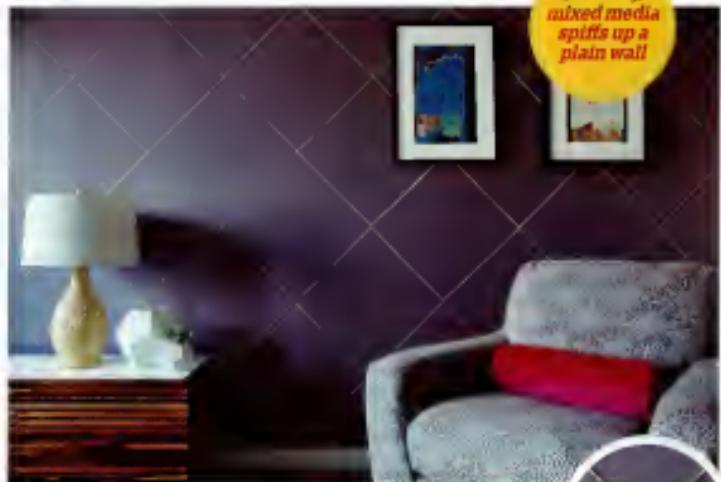
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They took a fresh tack

Blond white walls and a wallpaper-averse landlord inspire a young couple to harness their color and fiber-arts know-how

BY DEBORAH KALDWIN



**Joe and
Mayra
Hernan**
NEW YORK CITY

"People have
the wrong attitude
to equality."

WHEN YOUR HOMES NOT YOUR OWN, there's only so much you can do to alter its look. Joe and Maya Hernan, who live in a characterless white apartment, were thinking to put up wallpaper in their living room, but figured it'd be safer to opt for paint—with a twist. After sampling a few colors and zeroing in on moody gray-purple, Joe, an interior designer, notions a ball of cotton yarn over to Maya's knitting needles, in golden hue and plaid pattern, suggesting a scheme. Soon he found himself measuring the wall to create a precise grid of diamond dimensions. After pinning upholstery tacks precisely at each corner, he painted the wall and pushed the tacks in a bit more. Then, starting in the lower right corner, he wove the yarn left, then right, then left... until he'd worked his way across. "The first time, I ran out halfway through," he says. "So I took it all off, bought a new roll, and started again!" Joe compensated the purple hue by having an IKEA cabinet with white-painted cabinet doors. "If we ever move out, I hope the next tenant will want to keep it," he says of the accent wall. "If not," he notes, "the plan is to go into Maya's next knitting project." ■



Textural touch: Joe
repurposed yarn
around a sofa's tacks
to make this diamond
pattern. Photo: Gregorio
Soriano/Vivian Chen

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE DIRECTORY PAGE 26

Reader-Driven Issue | OCTOBER 2012 TIMEHOME.COM 25

life is
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that's
adventurous,
and a kitchen
where finding
the tools isn't

and a kitchen
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Heads up!

Answer the call of the wild with these cheeky trophy mounts

BY MEGAN BLAKEMORE • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK LINDEN

Another example

*taxidermy
is definitely
more fun*

Joe Montana
NEW YORK CITY
"Like the quality of

Using a Model to Predict

10 of 10

IF YOU'RE GOING to make a difference, you've got to own a grizzly, a ring, or a trumpet, even. We like to think that's what's behind the program's budgeted renewal. South are we in this year's budget review, like the bandstand house in *Modern Times*. Joe Hansen's living room (page 22), "I like the 3-D effect on my wall," Joe says. "It's a great piece of art." (See his 3-D glasses on page 23.) Theology has been *modern*, too. For instance, of course, in enjoying his *heyday* in the culture-crazed *Modern Times*, *Modern Times*, *Modern Times*, *Modern Times*—going from a basement art to three Madison replicas—after looks both *modern* and *bohemian*. Here, nice *bohemian* art to turn to as well. *See* *list*.



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2. **black antelope**
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Dimensions Painted resin
Size 4" W x 9" D x 10" H
Highlight Joseph
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antelope antlers in
classic hunting style. \$44;
gardendecorators.com

3. **rhino**
WLL, LTD.

Dimensions Painted resin
Size 8" W x 12" D x 10" H
Highlight Resin rhino
replicates every fold in
the animal's skin. \$44;
gardendecorators.com

4. **tall giraffe**
WLL, LTD.

Dimensions Painted resin
Size 20" W x 12" D x 20" H
Highlight The long
neck and gentle, docile
gaze will make this
giraffe a favorite for
any room. \$44; gardendecorators.com

5. **zebra**
WLL, LTD.

Dimensions Painted resin
Size 10" W x 12" D x 10" H
Highlight A zebra head of
modest proportions perfect for
any theme or wall display.
\$44; gardendecorators.com



6. **trunk show**
HOME DECORATORS
COLLECTION

Dimensions Resin
Size 27" W x 47" D x 17" H
Highlight Resin elephant
head painted in white.
\$44; homedecorators.com

7. **small-tim**
HOME DECORATORS
COLLECTION

Dimensions Resin
Size 12" W x 13" D x 16" H
Highlight This
adorable painted moose head is
the perfect addition to
any rustic or woodland
display. \$44; homedecorators.com

8. **head all about it**
WILDEMAN CRAFT

Dimensions Paper mache
Size 54" W x 27" D x 20" H
Highlight This papier
mache head is hand-painted
and framed in recycled paper.
\$44; wildecraft.com

9. **bold antelope**
WILDEMAN CRAFT

Dimensions Paper mache
Size 12" W x 12" D x 13" H
Highlight An antelope
head with a camouflage
pattern that's painted
for antlers. \$44;
wildecraft.com

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He's a backyard hero

While deployed 7,500 miles from home, this reader designed his dream backyard on paper, then spent months building it.

NEW SPANISH LANDSCAPES: A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION BY LUCAS ROMERO



WHEN IT COMES TO TRANSFORMING a backyard, most often do it over time—add some plants one year, follow up with landscaping the next—and the space is complete. It's the rare homeowner who formulates a plan, then executes it like clockwork. But *The Old House* reader Jessie Zavala did just that after spending about a year designing her ultimate yard.

Juan Zarino
CARMEL VALLEY
CALIFORNIA

"The way is
long—the yard
measures can be
reduced when
I'm here."

Guantanamo Bay prison to hold a year earlier than planned. Guantánamo that coming March, but a Christmas Day phone call changed things. Three weeks later he was in Afghanistan's northern Balkh province for the start of his fast and then The Inchiyed would have to wait.



REFORM While it had grown, the
church had become complacent.

AFTER The paved patio, a grapevine-covered pergola and an outdoor kitchen give Jason and his family room to spread out.

In between laying out and building Army and Marine bases overseas, Juan spent his downtime with magazines like *This Old House*, looking for ideas to turn the yard into a space where he could catch up with his family. "In a 70 percent plan, that's when I got back to the house and walked through the yard, became a home a 90 percent plan," he says, in military building terms. "The design was short on lawn, because the kids spend their time on bikes and skateboards out front, but big on activity-specific zones that would make the most of the wide and shallow 75-by-30-foot yard.

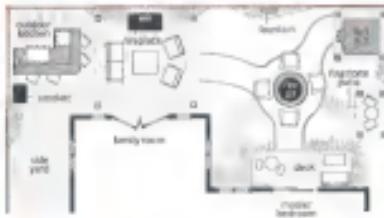
His sketch began with an outdoor room with a kitchen, and a fire pit to take the chill out of the evening air, which averages about 60°F in their area. Defined by a 12-by-15-foot paper patio and a redwood pergola above, the room is tucked into a corner with easy access to the family room. A gas fire pit ringed with Adirondack chairs is the perfect

1 Juan and his family use the patio space this Thanksgiving. **2** A pathway leads from the house to the gas fire pit and covered back deck, with stepping stones connecting to flagstone paths. **3** Family movie nights. They hang a portable projector screen there; the patio is where



the plan

Several outdoor rooms are scattered around the yard and are unified by a decomposed-granite path.



3 Juan picked up the wine barrel this past spring while visiting a vineyard and found inspiration in T.O.H.'s "Interplay fire" on page 102. **4** In just 18 months, the family grew the deck, the pergola, the fire pit, and even redwood. **5** The barbecue smoker, the newest addition to the yard, was a gift from Juan's son, Carlos. **6** Juan's wife, Vicki, and his son, Alyssa, the couple's youngest child, planned the deck perimeter with cattails; then he searched garden centers for palms, plumerias, birds of paradise, and lemongrass plants to give the yard a tropical feel.

Over a dozen weekends and a few week-long vacations in the eight months that followed, Juan and his family finished room after room. The younger son, Carlos, helped when the deck, the pergola, and the arbor, while Vicki kept an eye out for outdoor furniture within their budget. He and Alyssa, the couple's youngest child, planned the deck perimeter with cattails; then he searched garden centers for palms, plumerias, birds of paradise, and lemongrass plants to give the yard a tropical feel. Compared with the hauls of pounds of sand and wood that he filled, the plants often proved even more cumbersome. He had to replant the cattails—he'd underestimated their mature size—and muscle the 20-foot-tall queen palm trees into the back deck on a dolly.

While the project came together in the end as planned, the Zorros continue to improve upon it. This year they added a vegetable garden with eggplants, squash, tomatoes, and peppers. And Juan and Alyssa installed the redwood pergola with Edison-style outdoor lights. What once was empty lawn is now a lively gathering place. "Since we've been a lot and get homesick," Juan says, "I would sit in a spot, away from TVs and phones, where my family could catch up when I home. Now we're in the backyard all the time." ■



The real pregnancy test: remodeling

What better time to rip out the kitchen than when there's a bum in the oven? Your guide to getting it all done. Sort of

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PETER AND MARIA HOY



IT'S NOT JUST THE THRILL of having a child—it's the encroivable urge to finally finish the ate. And swap in a new kitchen sink, with a better faucet and a prettier backsplash, and saygle a new range while you're at it.

For issues known only to Mother Nature, nothing leaves its mark on home improvement quite like the unlivable stress of pregnancy. Call it brainwashing, or perhaps the power of a truly remarkable deadline. Every year, when you send out invites for this real estate issue, we hear without fail from couples who somehow, by some twist of logic, they wouldn't be able to explain themselves, decided to usher in a newborn by, say, installing a massive sunroom on the nursery roofline—in the middle of the night—or engaging in a frenzied game of the master bath after finally thinking all it needed was new towels.

In the spirit of celebration, if not the frank recognition of a grownup syndrome, we offer this pregnancy planner for expectant parents.

First trimester

Weeks 1–4

► Ah, life... so pleasant...so simple...
► Whoa! Two dark blue lines are positive, right? Oh my gosh! Existing! Terming! Remodeling!
► Text husband: Need to convert closet to nursery, STAT!

Weeks 5–8

► Call future grandparents with blessed news and if they can handle demolition
► Write a list of where to store the Bugaboo? Scratch that. Will carry lot. Can I afford stroller and remodel
► Empty house of alchemicals, commit to buying cleaning products derived only from expertly pressed thymustherums
► Handover MIA. Find that scrap of paper with pas overfor Angie's List. What's with this chick? Home office may need redo
► Test photoelectric smoke detector to ensure no one gets the bends

Weeks 9–12

► Hear parent's heart race—this is

really happening!

► Do GCs not text? And why are their home phones not listed? May need help with crib assembly, also with designing and building out new second-floor layout

Second trimester

Weeks 14–17

► Google "easy install no VOC wallpaper with neutral tones and purple colorway"
► Still no word from GC. Google "DIY building tips"—no, make that "especially reliable homeydeserts"
► Start list of baby names. (Why does "Angie" keep popping up?)

Weeks 18–21

► Hire "Miracle Mike" to convert closet and assemble one. Be very specific about deadline
► Expose baby to color therapy by painting paint switches on body. One tick means "loves it" or "hates it."
► Ultrasound. It's a girl!

Weeks 22–24

► Closet doors done on deadline! Let's name her Mike!



(In other words, a growing bump is a great motivator)

Buy Turns

► Ask boss re: maternity leave. Buy bigger pants, also bigger wet/dry vac

Weeks 25–26

► Where is Mike? Nursery still needs drywall—and maybe a window
► Download crib assembly tips
► Blouse LOVELOVELOVE a system of chairmats. Grrrrr.
► Ask friends how to baby proof kitchen. May need to gut it.

Third trimester

Weeks 27–32

► Not responding to REPEATED "fix house call" messages from Medina. Service has been delayed to a nester that deserves able-to-assemble crib

► Order kiln-dried beech from eBay. size: 0 Also find Wing walls boards from Amazon. size: 7. No, make it 8—kids are walking

► Help best friend plan baby shower. Hint: that guests should dress for a painting party

D-day

► Solar...nothing!
► Finish nursery, fit hundred-on-one
► Use downtime to reorganize kitchen shelves and alphabetize spines
► Don't forget cab later. Rehab dresser drawer for baby's welcome home.

Eight days past due date

► Seems awfully warm these days. Waiting by the back entrance of toddler while installing ceiling fan
► Double check handy. Maybe she can help heeling, too?
► Bath faucet has gotten. Vanity should too. Check Pinterest for tile options
► Weeks 37–40
► Crib not coming together. Buy dimensional lumber to craft one from scratch
► Stay up till 3 a.m. installing new faucet and medicine cabinet. Find great samples under drop cloth inside new vanity—how'd they get there?
► Don't forget to seat: baby blanket, spousal, and let's deck—closset needs new paint color scheme. ■

Inspired by the stories of Andrea Fox and daughter, Aria, Julie Turner (a daughter,太祖母, Rebecca Holland, mother, and son, Jackson, too). Illustrations: Andrea Fox and daughter, Aria, Julie Turner (a daughter,太祖母, Rebecca Holland, mother, and son, Jackson, too).

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The things they saved

A stripped-down Queen Anne comes back to life with the help of original details, some refurbished and some found

BY KATHARINE BICER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW TRAIL



Katharine Bicer and husband, Mario
BILTMORE, MASSACHUSETTS

"The first time we stepped through the door, it felt like we were home."

I HAVE A FASCINATION with the things people have lived with and lived. Our assist with this house, which we're shelling out on the new season of *This Old House*, is to reuse as many old details as possible. Of course we're making changes—adding a porch and a mudroom, putting in a new kitchen, and redoing the bedroom spaces. But we love knowing that elements that have always been here will continue to be a part of the house, a part of our home. Even though my husband, Mario, and I are from very different parts of the world—he grew up in an apartment building in Ankara, Turkey, and I grew up in a 1930s two-story in Norman, Oklahoma—we both treasure antiques objects. We bought a pair of vintage stained-glass windows at an antiques shop 10 years ago,

HONORING HISTORY
This season, *This Old House* general contractor Tim Silvers and his crew are renovating an 1890s Queen Anne in Belmont, Massachusetts (LEFT). Mario (above) and Katharine Bicer are from Massachusetts as well. To honor their home's original design (RIGHT), they plan to preserve as many of the original details as possible, including some brass fixtures. Katharine is styling up (TOP LEFT).

GOOD WOOD
RIGHT Ben
Backley of Silver
Brothers
Construction
reclaimed a massive
sunburst door
to a restored
original light
window casit

FAIR RIGHT Tom
Silver works on the
reclaimed door that
he and TOH
construction contractor
Matt Adams
reclaimed and
sanded, and then
reduced its width
from 36 inches to
24 inches to fit
the second-floor
bathroom



right after we were married. We had no real use for them, but we loved the design and the color of the glass, so we hung them in decoration in the two condos we lived in.

We must have a thing about windows, because that's one of the reasons we bought this house. The first time we stepped in the door, we felt like we were home. The whole house was bathed in sunlight. These were so many windows, most of them original and with imperfect wavy glass, which just makes such gorgeous light. As we walked around the house, we saw detail after detail that we loved.

We lived in the house for six months before starting the renovation, and despite the winter drafts decided to keep those old windows, nearly 40 in all. Our architect, Matthew Camarano, and TOH TV general contractor [Ben Silver] supported our decision, and the cost would be comparable to replacement. We dug up all the ashes to Gile Bozeman, where they are being recycled.



separated, reglazed, and repainted. Here at the house, the window walls are being scraped, and a rot and damage fixed. The windows will get weatherstripping where there was none, but the big improvement will be the new triple-track storm window, which have two storms and a screen暴幕, so we don't have to swap one for another with the seasons. Tom says a well-tailored single-pane window with a good quality storm is just as efficient as a new double-pane window. So our 1995 windows will get 2013 performance.

It's the best of both worlds, and we're trying to achieve that with other decisions as well. There were things that had been hidden or covered up or removed over the years, and we want to bring those elements back. There were old doors in place and also screens in the basement—screens with screens, doors with doors, wood-pane doors. We're going to be able to use original five-panel doors in almost every room, but there's such an assortment of hardware, we're still working out how to deal with that. We'd like to figure out how to

organize the hardware by style—for example, one floor with all crystal doorknobs, another floor with all brass—instead of having to replace all the knobs. Consistency throughout the house doesn't matter to us as much as using the same pieces that people have used to open doors for over and over again for years.

We're also creating simple brass sconces that were in various places around the house. When the wall was opened up around one sconce, you could see the honeycomb lighting technology: gas line, brass tube, copper wiring. We love that. Two of these sconces are going in the master bath.

Our same wall also gets a refinished claw-foot tub and a restored marble vanity top, both of which level at 4 inches off the floor. The tub was so beat up, we weren't sure it could be saved, but it's going to add so much warmth and character to the room.

All these original items mean so much to us. Matt says that if you live in a house that's been around longer than you have, it makes you feel part of the neighborhood, like you belong. It's so true. And moving things that belong in the house is part of what makes us feel that we belong here too. ■



SALVAGED PANE LEFT This antique window pane that once was a screen is one of a pair that has been repurposed as a sconce. It will grace the powder room.

BEDTIME Katherine brought 30 vintage cast iron door pulls knowing they will add period charm to the kitchen.

OPPOSITE The Bonsai tree and several of the antique screens that have been repurposed and repainted for the new fireplace in the living room.



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They took a page from us

Plenty of people are happy just flipping through *This Old House*, but these determined DIYers didn't stop there.

BY MEGAN KUEK AND DEBORAH BALDWIN

HOMEOWNER TO DOLLARS tend to run from the annoying to the mundane. But some of you like to think big. Alabama "replace HEPA filter" and "buy lightbulbs" you might add "master woodcarving skills" and "build a mural." While poring over the submissions to our reader-remodel contest, we were struck by the many projects that began with a how-to in TOH. You've armed us with your skills and inspired us with the creative ways you do around problems. And we're grateful for the trust you place in us to guide you along the way. As Tom Rife (see his cabinets on the next page) wrote, "In doing all the work ourselves, as remodelers know, you build everything twice in your mind and then physically constructing everything. Fear of the unknown always plays a part, but TOH alleviates those fears." Plan off to all you dreamers—and to the sampling of your DIY do-it-do-



rolled on a stair runner



Heather Thibodeau
LAURELVILLE, MARYLAND

THE INSPIRATION: *11 Ways to Give Your Home a Personal Stamp*, May 2013, and "Add a Runner Without Carpet or Nails," May 2009

THE ADAPTATION: While updating her family's finished basement, devoted DIYer and blogger Heather (heatherthibodeau.com) wanted to brighten the staircase. She and her husband, Dave, began by removing all wall papering up the stairs. After removing the treads from the corner-run landing with utility-grade saw, Heather took a belt sander to the worn pine treads. Luckily, "there were no splinters; the risers were already painted, and because we were re-painting the stairs, I have to be perfect." Then she primed the treads and laid down two base-coats of white paint and pink floor paint. "We use FrogTape to create the effect of a runner, sealing the edges with the base color as the second color is laid under." It's been two years, Heather notes, "and it's held up very well."

• great adaptations



crafted oak cabinets

Tom Rose
NORTH CANTON, OHIO
THE INSPIRATION
"In Fine Detail,"
January/February 2008

THE ADAPTATION Professional baker and lifelong DIYer Tom and his wife, Sue, lived with their 1940s kitchen for 20 years before he was able to remodel it. Cabinets of nearly grained quarter-sawn white oak on full display in the January/February 2008 issue, were upcycled in this couple's hands. Armed with a compound mitre saw and aided by close friend and master Mark Saber, Tom made not only the base, but also the face frames, door panels, rails, and stiles. Then he completed each door face by gluing on eight 1/8-inch wide strips, "including the panel that's 13 pieces per face," he says. "And there are 20 doors. It's a simple construction but as solid—people are amazed to think I made them."



dressed up the fireplace

Ashley and Brett Farries
CALCUTTA, TEXAS
THE INSPIRATION "Fireplace Face-Off" for just \$87,"
January/February 2013

THE ADAPTATION The plain painted fireplace in their 1950s ranch bugged Ashley, who prefers the look of natural stone and traditional trim. After single-handedly stripping off the paint, she worked with Brett to re-create the mantel in the January/February 2013 Budget Reno. "We wanted a strong, clean look, and we acquired tools slowly," she says. They used their new table saw to cut panels and a shelf out of MDF, shopped at a home center for MDF molding, and installed the assembly with glue, masonry screws, and a nail gun. All things considered, says Ashley, "I think we did a good job of making it look as if it has always been there." Agreed!

sculpted a garden

Jimm and Cynthia Carroll
MOHAWK, NEW JERSEY
THE INSPIRATION "Focus on
Foliage," April 2009

THE ADAPTATION After digging out a terrible mess from the April 2009 issue featuring a whimsical border garden, this paired-house proud couple revamped their backyard with foliage—including two well-established trees, like a graceful pear on right. "We had difficulty growing grass there," says Jimm, "so our choices were to stretch a lawn or create an environment that wouldn't mind wandering." The article got them thinking about shape, structure, and layers—well as texture and color. "Before, the yard was a blank slate," Cynthia says. Today it looks Japanese-style, rhododendron, maple, and flowering bulbs, and the foliage keeps it lush practically year-round.



set off a home office

Jason Austin
LIBERTY, NORTH CAROLINA
THE INSPIRATION "Build a Columned Room
Corner," January/February 2013

THE ADAPTATION Jason "wanted to give something back" to his parents, Emma and Robert, so he remodeled at his childhood home in Danville, Virginia, long enough to carry out his first Reno since 1975. His mom and dad's wish list included a columned office and an open floor plan through so he replaced wall with our columned room divider. "I felt lost with the on-site magazine," he says of the January/February 2013 how-to, "and built a pretty much to the space." His main inspiration: using a mix of painted and clear-coated wood shelves and an armoire on the side opposite the office serve as an entire reading nook. Jason is a person who loves spaciousness when they sleep, "They've given me so much," he says. "I thought I could do something big for them." ■





You folks sure can pinch a penny!

We salute our 2015 champions of cheap—equal parts genius and thrifty—who refuse to accept the concept of full price. **ILLUSTRATIONS BY GREG CLARK**



Barbie goes prime time

Katherine Headman HERMIT, CALIFORNIA
I took a big-old TV that didn't work, gutted it with a butter knife and wire cutters, and made a Barbie Dreamhouse for my daughter. Fifteen Barbies live there now.

What Katherine saved: \$474



Hey, you gonna keep that?
Suzanne Long LOYOLA, CALIFORNIA
While visiting a home show, we passed a beautiful lighted composite deck and play it looked like we could play right down in our front yard so I asked the man who was

working there if it was for sale. He said it was—for half price. We got a 1/2 Heartless and the men at the show broke down the deck and loaded it up for us.

What Suzanne saved: \$2,500

Painting for the perfect floor
Keri Karrer PLYMOUTH, INDIANA
When remodeling our 250s-plus cottage, we wanted wide-plank wood floors but could afford nothing we found in local retailers. In our search, we discovered 8-inch-wide, 1/8-inch-thick tongue-and-groove pine planks normally used as knotty pine wall paneling. There's a

decorative V notch on one side but the back is perfectly flat. So we laid the planks back side up and face-nailed each board to prevent cupping. We sanded the installed floor with an inverted circular sander, then applied two coats of high-build floor varnish. The total cost finished was about \$2.50 per square foot.

What Keri saved: \$4,500

It's all in the details
Jennifer Montague Clark OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA
I couldn't justify spending money on an investment over-seen order to give the plain

SEEDMO IS BELIEVING
First category of our annual
Creative
House
Contest

flat front door of my 1934 Craftsman new dimension and character. I decided to add detail. I went down to the lumber store and took a few samples of clear rail molding. I traced it to the front door, caulked and painted it and—voilà!—it's ours again!

What Jennifer saved: \$3,066

Concrete chic

Charli Holloway
MUSKEGO, WISCONSIN
We wanted to create

an indoor and outdoor space in our unfinished basement for our college student daughter to move when she got home. We didn't have the time or money for a full renovation, so we decided to attempt a do-it-yourselfer. We started by covering the poured-concrete walls with joint compound to create faux-brick walls. I used a level as a guide and drew the great lines with my finger. After it dried, I painted the interest areas to resemble bricks. To finish the look, we painted the concrete floor to simulate wood planks. She loves it! Altogether, we bought seven buckets of joint compound (\$75), and 3 gallons and 4 quarts of paint (\$40).

What Charli saved: \$6,476

Lighting tricks

Dana Simpson ALBION, MICHIGAN
When it came to lighting for our kitchen remodel, we had to get creative. I found supplies to make a couple of sconces from an online lighting parts dealer, and my husband did the wiring. I spray-painted some of

the fixture in dark brown, some in brushed nickel, and some we left in the original brass, for a mixed-metal look. It was quite an adventure since I didn't know a source who sells sconces before we bought.

What Dana saved: \$372

Going to great lengths

Andy Coughtry
SOUTH BELoit, ILLINOIS
We found an identity

overdue

Wisconsin that could manufacture shelves for our laundry room at \$6.75 a square foot versus the \$15.75 we'd been quoted by a local supplier. My husband, youngest son and I took our truck and a ladder trailer on a 10-hour round trip to pick up our bargain-down. On the same day, we had dinner at an adorable family restaurant and shopped at an antique store, where I found the coolest vintage sink—it's now a part of my laundry room.

What Andy saved: \$4,860

A money-saving resolution

Edwin Hill
LITTLETON, COLORADO
Right after New Year's I went to our home

center to talk about options for my kitchen renovation. The employee spoke with me in an off-the-record manner, and I was given a short period for our subcontractors, because most folks are paying off holiday bills. To secure my business, they offered me a 25-percent discount off the total price to have granite counters and my cabinets refaced.

What Edwin saved:

about \$10,000

Harvesting house parts

Beverley Hanisch

INTERLAKEN, NEW YORK
We needed a new handrail in our back entry. We had recently cleared trees on our property, and there was a hop hornbeam tree with a trunk the perfect diameter. My son cut it down to size, stripped the bark, and sandied the wood. No finish was applied, but it has a nice patina from "palm" oil. We now have a unique, interesting handrail, decorated with insect squiggles and holes, also cost. I bought the sturdy brackets at a reuse store. Total cost: \$25, plus lunch for my son.

What Beverley saved: \$95.36 ■



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You love this vintage touch

Taking a cue from reader remodels, we decided to retrofit a charming old bureau for a whole new purpose

BY PAUL HORN + PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY TIEULI



cost \$25 plus the
thinner sink and top
time: Two days

DIFFICULTY Moderate. Hire
a pro to fabricate the top.



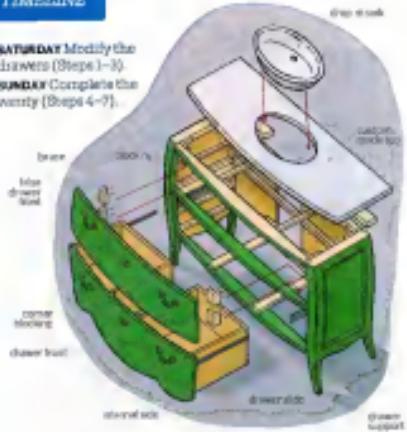
Caleb Kettner
WOODLAND
PARK,
COLORADO

"I didn't want
anything like
everyone else."

"I WAS LOOKING FOR ANTIQUE DRESSERS on Pinterest when I stumbled across people using them as vanities," says reader Caleb Kettner, who decided to make one himself. "The trickiest part is fitting the plumbing." Indeed, to make way for the trap, you'll have to modify the drawers. Who better to demonstrate how to do that than This Old House master carpenter Norm Abram? Now, his version of the project is pretty involved; the dresser here is all carved openness, and it got a new top of marble with a drop-in sink, requiring more modifications. You can make it easier on yourself by plugging a vessel sink right on top of a solid-top piece. Either way, the approach is the same: See for yourself as Norm walks you through the steps to adding a truly original focal point to your bath, all while preserving a precious bit of drawer space.

Readers' Remodels
Country Bath
Collector: \$3,100
marthastewart.com

SATURDAY Modify the
drawers (Steps 1–3).
SUNDAY Complete the
wardrobe (Steps 4–7).



1000

- > **clamps**
- > **climbing vine** or
intermediate vine
- > **coiled** (coiled)
with a bush-cutting
poker or a hand-held
tree cutting saw
- > **clutch**
- > **clutter**
- > **coiled** and **twisted**
- > **tape measure**
- > **straight bridge**
- > **pencil**
- > **marker square**
- > **sliding T level**
- > **center line**
- > **table saw**
- > **hammer and
pry bar**
- > **parametric dried
sealer**
- > **glue brush**
- > **stud finder**
- > **gauge**
- > **dresser**
- > **drill-tilt**
- > **vessel sink**
- > **appliance dresser**
- > **double hardware**
- > **carpet** (carpet of
150 soundseal
insert full extension
studs) (match the
depth of the drywall)
- > **corner molding** (Get
a 7-foot length for
blocking)
- > **Led** (parallel to a 6-foot
length for side
raising and corner
blocking)
- > **Lx2 pipe** (Get a 2-foot
length for the floor
braces)
- > **2x6 framing** (snap
to secure the vanity
to the wall)
- > **1/4-inch-tiled corners**
- > **3/8-inch-welded corners**
- > **1/2-inch-welded
screws**
- > **1/4 inch 18 gauge
brads**
- > **resin** (glue)
- > **silicone sealant**

MATERIALS

lumber
drop-in or
raised sink
drywall
drywall cleaner
double hardware
flat cap pair
100-gram
exterior full extension
glaze: scratch the
bottom of the drivers
hand sander
hand sanding
Cell
hand tools
7 foot height for
skiing
l 4x6 panel: a 6-foot
empty for side
lawn and garden
decking
2 x 6 panel: 2.5 foot
length for the
picnic
b 6x18mm: wrap
so the base of the vanity
to the wall
4x10mm: wood corner
1x6 wood: shelves
24-inch wood
screws
48 inch 30 garage
cords
silica gel
silicone seal



卷之三

1 Separate the upper drawer face

A3 Cut the drawer sides. On this dresser the upper drawer must be removed to allow room for the drop in sink. That means the drawer sides have to come off and be remounted later to create a false-front. Complete drawer to a neck surface and then the front and handles to cut along the sides of the drawer where they meet the face, as shown.

8 Cut the drawer bottoms. Rip the drawer upgrade down and fit the resulting board with a flush cutting blade or a straight-blade flush cutting saw. Cut along the backside of the drawer front, where the bottoms meet it, keeping the blade straight (see Step 4) and cut the drawer front as well as the parts of the drawer frame—just like them in Step 3 to modify the lower drawer. Use a hand/Power Jigsaw to complete the drawer top.



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2

Modify the lower drawer

A) Mark the lower drawer. To make room for the plumbing, you'll need to build a notch into at least one of the drawers—in this case, the lower one. Rest the drawer upside down on your work surface, and measure and mark spots 4 inches to the right and left of the drawer's centerline. Use the straightedge as shown to draw cutouts on the bottom of the drawer. Transfer your marks to the back of the drawer.

B) Cut the drawer. Clamp the drawer so that you can work on its back. Using the rafter square as a guide, follow the cutouts along the back of the drawer with the band saw. Keep the drawer clamped, and continue following the cutouts on the bottom of the drawer until you reach the face. Use either the maulstick or the hand saw to finish the cut and separate the cuts at where it attaches to the face.



TIP

If you don't have a table saw, make corner blocking from cove or quarter-round molding.



B

C



3

Build the plumbing cutout

A) Cut the internal sides. Take the upper drawer's back and use the slicing T-bevel to find the angle where one end meets the top, then transfer the angle and cut the end. Hold the piece against the notch and mark it where the back of the lower drawer intersects it. The new piece will be sandwiched between the drawer front and the drawer back. Cut the piece on the band saw. Measure, mark, and cut the opposite piece.

B) Attach the internal sides. Dry-fit the newly cut pieces. One at a time, remove them and run a bevel wood glue along the edges where they already fit them in place, and reinsert them with the gunpowder and gun and 1/8-in. 18-gauge brads as shown. Wrap any excess wood glue with a damp cloth.

C) Add the corner blocking. Rip-cutted blocking 1 in. thick on the table saw. Brush the right angle edges of the blocking with wood glue, position them between the drawer sides and face, and tack them in place.



D



E

F

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5 Attach the drawer slides

A] Set the drawer rail. Follow the slide installation instructions to position the linear rail against the side of the drawer. Check that the hardware is square to the back of the drawer, and mark the pre-punched holes on the blocking. Hold the rail in place and secure it to the drawer with the included 1/4-inch wood screws. (Repeat this process on the other drawer side.)

B] Secure the slide to the dresser. Measure below the dresser's crossbrace according to the slide's installation instructions, and mark that spot on the blocking. Detach the slide rail from the track to access the screw holes and hold the track in place with its top edge of your miter. Fasten one side of the track to the support with an included screw. Square up the track before driving a second screw, then drive screws through the remaining holes. Install the slide on the other side in the same way.

C] Add the drawer supports. Use the hammer and pry bar to remove the center drawer guides from the bottom of the dresser frame. Measure and cut four pieces of 1/8-inch thick scrap to connect the front and back of the dresser frame. The supports should rest on the back of the frame and be flush with the front edge of the dresser. Space them under the new drawer slides, glue down the supports, and tack them in place with 1/4-inch brads.



4 Add the blocking

A] Cut the slide blocking. The grooved dresser drawers slide on wood guide rails. To pad the dresser drawers with optional heavy-duty slides, install blocking flush between the leg framing. First, measure between the front and back of the dresser frame just above the wooden guides, as shown. Cut a 1x4 to that length. Make 1x4 blocking for the other side the same way.

B] Install the slide blocking. Add spacers to fill the gap between the blocking and the dresser, securing them with plus and L-brads. Wrap a 1x4 before on the leg framing just above the wooden guides on each side, and toenail the ends into the framing. Use the hammer and pry bar to remove the old wooden drawer guides.



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WhisperFit EZ
VENTILATION



6 Reattach the drawer face

A | Make the base frame. Tools: 1/2-in. face of the upper drawer; miter L-shaped braces. First, cut 3-inch pieces of 1x2 and glue them together, edge to face, in an L shape, as shown. Turn the pieces together with 1/8-in. brads. Make four braces; join the outside of the drawer face.

B | Attach the brace. Hold the brace at the upper drawer. Impress on the dresser, and position a brace in the corner where it meets the dresser frame. Turn the brace to the base and drill a pilot hole through the brace and into the face of the drawer. Remove the 1/8-in. brads; wood screws. Glue the brace to the dresser frame and install the remaining braces. Slide the lower drawer in place.



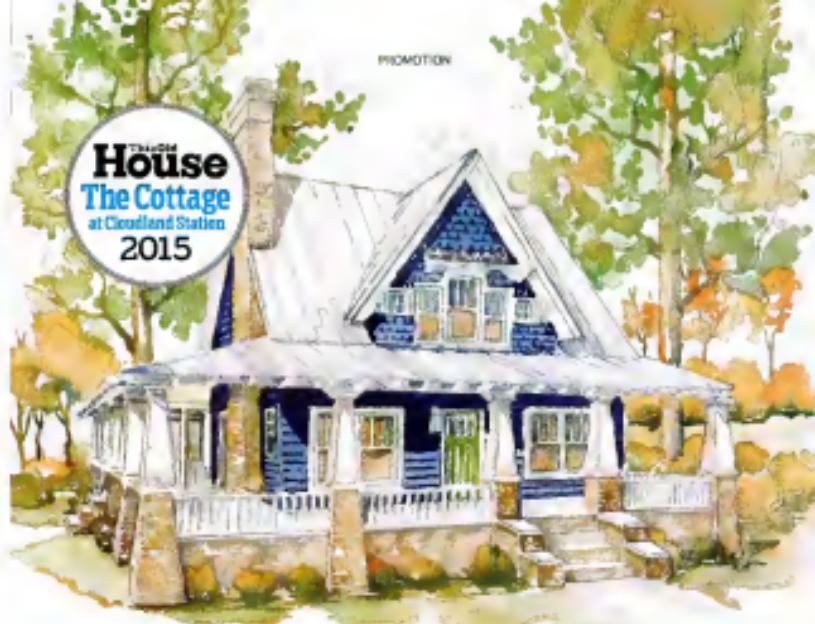
7 Install the vanity

A | Secure the vanity. Position your new vanity in the bathroom; its back edge about 3H-inches off the wall. Use the stud finder to locate mounting points and cut two pieces of 2x4 scrap. Align the scrap with those marks and screw through the back of the vanity into each 2x4 with a pair of 3-inch wood screws. Push the vanity against the wall and drill an expansion pilot hole through each 2x4 and into a wall stud and fasten with 3-in. drywall screws.

B | Trim the sink base. Once the marble countertop is cut for the drain fixture, move back to make a curved cut in a cross support in the dresser frame. If your installation requires a similar cut, set a compass to the width of the sink and cut following the spigot; marking a curved surface on the cross support. Follow along the line with a saw.

C | Install the sink. Dry fit the sink at the opening in the countertop. If it fits, fill the countertop's recessed hole with silicone caulk. Remove the sink and caulk to the vanity countertop; apply a bead of silicone caulk on the underside of the sink's perimeter and press the sink in place. Lay the drain and faucet and make the plumbing connections. ■

To ease installation, attach your fixtures before dropping the sink in.



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LUTRON

(((HOME SMART HOME)))

(Reader request)
How to get
your home
connected

Meet the Johnsons—Jason, Sue, and son Jake—and see how app-controlled gadgets are making life at home easier (even for their dog, Max) while cutting energy costs. What works for them can work for you, too. Turn the page to learn how



BY LAURA TRASER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEN GUTMAKER

**HEY, BUDDY,
HOW R U?**

(1) Petcube is a interactive Wi-Fi Pet Camera (\$199) lets you watch & enjoy your pets from far away. Just talk to your pet or download the app to understand it. "The definitely hasn't caught playing with Max," notes Jason (HMET, 401-618).

(2) Pekka's General cleaner (\$199) can clean where there's still food in the bowl. It'll even do a deeper cleaning than spills ever. It will recognize you if you return to food.

Jason Johnson was

at work one day when an app on his smartphone alerted him that his garage door was open. He knew that he left his house and anyone could easily grab their keys or even try to break into the house. So he tagged a banner within the app, and the garage door—several miles away—closed and locked. He switched apps and checked the live feeds from three different surveillance cameras outside his modest 1957 Tudor-style home, switched apps again and made sure the front door was locked. Satisfied, he peed at a nearby feed to see if his dog was at his feed bowl. Too bad if Max had been there, Jason could have played a fun game of I-spy with him.

Like any decent San Francisco-based tech entrepreneur, Jason owns a smartphone crammed with apps, but 25 of them are dedicated solely to the 1,500-square-foot smart house he shares with his wife, Sue, and young son, Jake.



COME ON IN

LEFT: As See Johnson commutes to work, he dons the Thorntech Thor.
(3) August Smart Lock (EZRE) authorizes users via smartphone or Bluetooth and an app to unlock a command to retract the dead bolt—letting the user in without reaching for a key (or two phones for that matter).

14.3 Lutron's Caseta Wireless Plug-in Lamp Dimmer [14.10] lets you control two lamps from the individual switch or connected to a Lutron's **SmartBridge** [14.10] system via phone.

1.3 *Resident's zone* **Heidi Pro**
[S110] used green Phase 6
existing wiring as a backbone
to a radio-frequency
signaling control lighting
throughout the house as
well as the Reed thermostats.
Operability walls between
existing sensors and other
devices will come later



“When I see a light on, water flowing, or heat coming on—to me, that’s money. It’s in my DNA not to waste anything.”

JIMMIE & JESSICA

(6.) **Conway's full HD security cameras** (\$249 each) can connect to a live video feed to your smartphone...and a piercing alarm is used when you're triggered by any of its many sensors...like a sudden shift in temperature that could indicate a fire. If you want to review the video, it's also a simple task.

Get a new way to enjoy music with the **Cloud Stereo** app.

Thanks to the apps and the Bluetooth-connected devices they talk to, he can—frogs anywhere with cell service—control pretty much every system in the house, including locks, lighting, heat, music, motion and smoke detection, plant irrigation, video surveillance, and, yes, pet, course feeding. Jimson is a poster child for the smart-home revolution, and his investment in tech and tech for tending a glove gives him a decided head start on the rest of us—assuming homeowners left to grapple with quantum爵士, Jimson will need to master my Crochet-It until my own personal? Thanks to him, he's found his immediate future. (For return, he can sell us what words and what devices.)

"He can't do it," says Sue. She's looking at him, not without admiration, across their living room. "As soon as a director shows up, he opens the beer and he's working out."

He shrugs...presses a button to make a cup of coffee from a machine he purchased so that he never needs coffee with water. "First and foremost, it's about coffee," he says. "I don't have any whiskey and I don't drink. It's just cool when you come up to your door and it refers to you without a key." Ray has been using this alias a guy who, when he couldn't find a handle-free deal ball he liked for his front door, started a company called Aeronaut, which makes custom locks.

But aside from whimsy, Jason says he installed most of the smart-home electronics to save money—and sanity (and you can do the math). Lights that automatically turn off, a thermostat that ramps down when no one is home, and water sensors that monitor plant irrigation are all conservation measures that back him in Jason's legal childhood. "When I see a light on, water flowing, or heat cooking on a stove, that's money," he says. "It's in my DNA not to waste anything."

Johnson's hair became darker and thicker as he grew older.



COMFY COZY

(8) Nest Learning Thermostat (\$249) automatically reduces heat during cooling while you're away by sensing motion and lagging when you override the temperature, saving on energy costs. It also syncs with the August app, which prompts you to toggle the thermostat's status—HOME or AWAY—when the door is unlocked or locked.



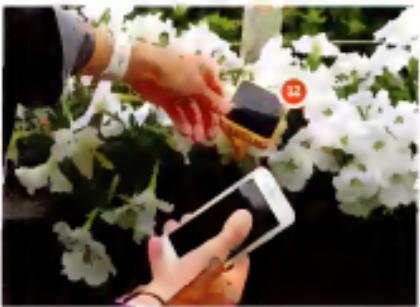
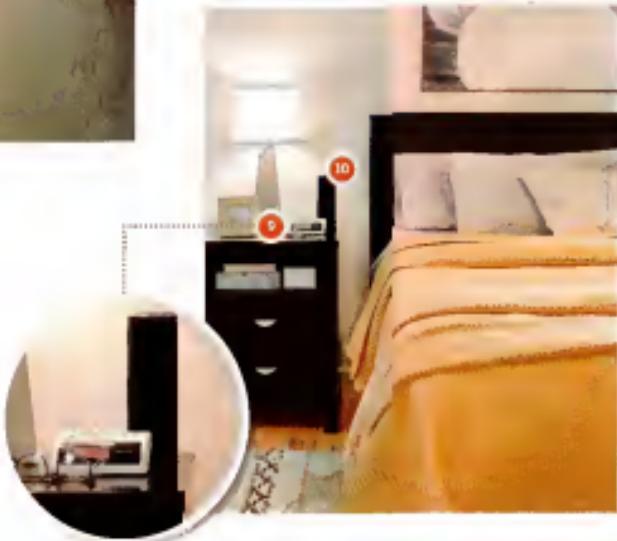
REST, RECHARGE, REDUCE

(9) Rockin' Blush's Lamp (\$100) is a house of 1000 lights. Each Rockin' Blush lamp is made of individual light switches to turn them on and off individually. The adjustable prongs let the detailed gadget be having funtimes in the laundry—pantry, bathroom, toilet, and television.

(10) Amazon's Wi-Fi Plug (\$10) can monitor your home about the weather forecast and ship packages around in storms. Thanks to well-engineered smart programming software.

(11) Leviton's 4-Port USB Charger (\$5.99) replaces the old routers in a convenient receptacle. It's a great way to charge and uncluttered charging station for a connected family.

(12) Eyer's Garden Sensor (\$149) monitors key factors to prevent flooding—light, moisture, temperature, and humidity. It even monitors— and controls—fertilizer guidance to your spreadsheet. "We're trying to reduce our water usage in the California drought," says Jason.



doorbell, unlock the front door, watch them set the package inside—thank him—and lock the door after he closes it. "I don't feel particularly at risk in San Francisco, and we don't have any value in jewelry or fancy art in the house," Jason says. "All I care about is keeping my family safe when I'm not home. I can check that the door is locked from my hotel room, and that gives me peace of mind."

Undaunted, to get such functionality, a homeowner would need to hire a pro to install a proprietary system known mostly to the grand-community set, or sign a contract with a security company or cable provider for a subscription-based monitored system. But that's not the case in the mold of August. Homeowners can choose it à la carte from a marketplace of over 1000 devices, some of which talk to each other (and some of which don't).

Jason called the August Smart Lock when he realized that, between several housekeepers and the contractors renovating the basement, there were lots of keys floating around. With his creation, he or Sue can use three phones to email an electronic key to anyone and also delete it—if, say, their housekeeper oversteps working for them.

One night, a dog barked and crashed through the glass door. The Japanese dog had intruded. Sue heard a knock in the kitchen and tipped in, her heart pounding—to find four raccoons eating the dog's dog food. Miles down, they'd come in through the dog door, which, she and Jason now observed, was wide enough for a person to crawl through. After anxiously ushering them out with a broom, Jason set about finding a better solution. He installed a kick-proof door that slides up and down with a whoosh, via a sensor on Miles's collar, whenever he approaches. Since then, says

child, growing up in Portland, Oregon, with a single mother in a house where broken things weren't fixed, there was no money to replace them. Repairing and jury-rigging things brought some order and enchantment to a breakable childhood. He says, "Transformation is having the grandchild every little boy should have, with a basement crowded with treasure—old-timey trains, matches, half-broken things, and millions of tools."

When he and Sue moved in, 15 years ago, Jason immediately set to work updating the 1950s track lighting and installing in-wall speakers, climbing into the attic with a friend to run the wires. "They come down covered in black soot, like they'll be having a campfire in the fireplace," Sue says. Jason figures a coal stove exploded up there at some point.

Though his smart-home journey began with automated lighting, it has branched out to more vital aspects of family life, like security. Using door locks, an HD video doorbell, and HD cameras all wirelessly connected to the internet, he and Sue can monitor the house more readily than via a motion-and-alarm system, while saving a monthly fee. They can, for instance, interact with the UPS guy when he rings the



KICK BACK

C13 Logitech's Harmony One Home Remote (\$199.99) can control 10 devices

and entertainment devices through programmable buttons and also adjust Philips' Hue lightbulbs and a Nest thermostat to set the mood.

C14 Apple TV (\$99) is just one of three streaming devices Jason uses for web programming. The others are the Roku 3 (\$99) and Amazon's Fire TV (\$99.99); [amazon.com/1yvz082](http://apple.com/1yvz082)

C15 Chromecast (\$39.99) records live digital programming from a 4.1-tube digital tuner while you watch another program and quickly records an integrated programming guide.

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TechHome.com

See. "Leaving Max out is just one little thing we have to worry about." And if there were ever a fire, they'd know he wouldn't be trapped.

Despite Jason's eagerness to try new gadgets, they keep only those that simplify their lives. That包括water features, the dog, which barked, damaged the floor, and got moldy inside. Brought to the basement, alongside a collection of other smart-home traps, The gadgets that remain must be intuitive as opposed. "It's important that anybody who comes into the house can still use the locks, the lights, and the appliances without having special knowledge or training," Jason says. The light switches and thermostats work like normal ones—they just do more. A winter can turn the thermostat up or down without knowing it's on a schedule, monitoring whether anyone's home.

The one aspect of the household that Jason wants to improve

is the smart-home perimeter in the media room. The Johnsons' TV console bristles with every kind of over-the-top-sounding device, from Apple TV to Roku, yet they still pay good money every month for cable. "It's a source of frustration," Sam says about the array of content sources. Particularly when John wants to watch *How to Train Your Dragon* and nobody can remember how to access it.

"A 6-year-old won't know what to do," says Jason.

"There's always the laptop," says Sam, sighing. Jason nods and offers up a radical alternative: "Just grab a book."

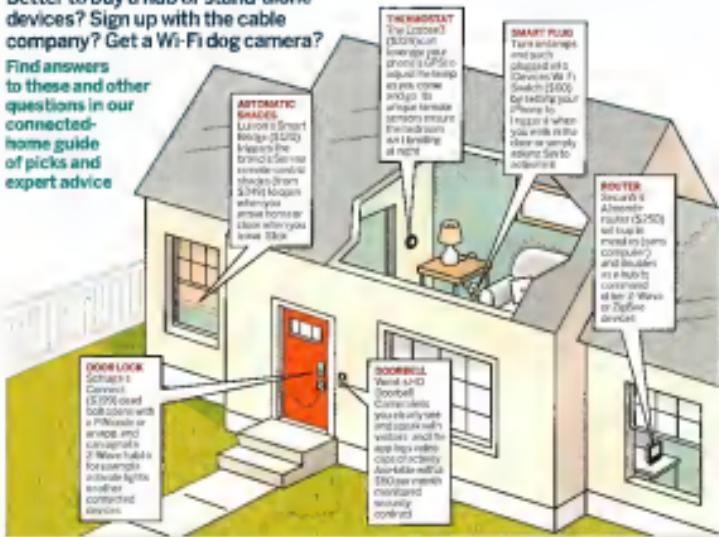
He's only half joking. In his role, Jason is acutely aware that whatever the here of the smart home, if the gadgets don't work, people will be perfectly happy to go on living their lives as they did before. You remember back when the only thing connected to the Internet was the computer?

HOW TO SMARTIFY YOUR HOME

EDITED BY ERIC HAGERMAN

Better to buy a hub or stand-alone devices? Sign up with the cable company? Get a Wi-Fi dog camera?

Find answers to these and other questions in our connected-home guide of picks and expert advice



GEEK SPEAK

From Apple HomeKit to Z-Wave, common smart-home jargon demystified

APPLE HOMEKIT is a technology built into iOS that enables users to easily add certified devices to their HomeKit network, control them securely, and manage them centrally for the purpose of orchestrating "scenes" (in other words, control through a home app).

BLUETOOTH LE is a wireless communication technology that enables energy-efficient, low-latency devices such as heart rate sensors to run for years on a single set of batteries.

BLUETOOTH any device that connects to the Internet, except if it's otherwise a perfectly clairvoyant machine.

HUB a central access point that allows smart home devices connected to

the Internet to share signals to coordinate in real-time.

HTTP acronym: *H*ypertext Transfer Protocol, a web-based protocol that transports conditional triggers, or "triggers," between Internet devices and Internet events, e.g., a fire in a phone Google's "second screen" at nightfall. These "triggers" connect coffee makers to bed-side lamps (see [this](#)).

INTERNET OF THINGS is a state of evolution of the Internet in which machines transfer data over a network without requiring human interaction.

FRESH NETWORK is a mesh radio-powered device that relay information by relaying to one another rather than through a central hub.

GEENE is an iPhone created when smart devices are triggered to adjust to predetermined settings off screen, e.g., nightlights dim. Bonus words: *Berry White*, *Crack*. For business folks—*remote device*.

ZIGBEE is a communication protocol based on low-power wireless radio signals that allow devices to talk to one another via a mesh network.

IP CAMERA is a video camera that allows smart home automation protocols over the Internet.

ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFREY C. HARRIS; CLOTHESLINE BY KAREN L. STROH



The hub to consider

The **Insteon Hub-Pro** is the first and only smart-home hub to integrate HomeKit compatibility, which makes for easy pairing of new devices. And, though this new version doesn't yet control Insteon's full library of hundreds of devices, you can use Siri to command lighting, thermostats and any other HomeKit devices. Or you can rule them all from one app, combining them together in scenes. Early reviews were bruising, but the company claims firmware updates have resolved the issues. \$150; [insteon.com](#)

THE CAMERA THAT KNOWS YOU

Facial-recognition software allows the **Netatmo Welcome** IP video-camera to learn to spot up to 16 different people in a household, then issue notifications. (Home is here.) It records clips of comings and goings day or night to an onboard micro SD card, keeping your business off the cloud encircling you the perimeter, not to mention the monthly storage fees. \$199; [netatmo.com](#)



THE SPEAKER THAT LISTENS

Alexa, the voice of Amazon's cloud-based service embodied in the Echo, is not always the smartest gal in the room—she may occasionally stub a simple request, like reading your horoscope—but she has acute hearing and terrific pipes. Ask her to play your favorite Pandora station or any track you've ever ordered from Amazon, and she'll hear your request even against a noisy background. She can also order you new socks, or entertain you with a joke: "What did zero say?" Nice belt! \$180; [amazon.com](#)

A WORD ABOUT PASSWORDS

How to remember those long strings of mixed-case letters and symbols recommended by security experts? The best, but not today's digital password vault, such as **1Password**, it generates and stores separate usernames and passwords for all your online accounts, granting you access via a single password—one that you'll want to remember. Free: [agilebits.com](#)



How to hack-proof your smart home

"Anything that's always connected, always sending data—that's something a nearby attacker can latch on to," says Craig Young, senior security researcher at the risk management firm Tripwire. Here are his tips for protecting your router and Wi-Fi devices.

> Replace an old router. It's five or more years old, spring for a new one—it'll be more secure.

> Set the security level. Select WiFi in Wi-Fi settings (and avoid WPS at all costs).

> Separate traffic. If your router supports guest network, use it for devices that don't need to talk to others.

> Update firmware. Enable auto-updates, which often patch security holes in old devices.

> Use a separate e-mail. Set up an account solely for connected devices, to limit the personal info exposed to a hack.

> Set a strong password. Use at least 20 characters of mixed cases and symbols and avoid any words in the dictionary. And this bears repeating: Change every and default passwords.

POINT OF ENTRY

If you've never known life without keys, well, it's a wonderful thing. Indeed, these four smart-home door locks are all about convenience.

PRODUCT	MODE OF ENTRY	KEY MANAGEMENT	NEAT TRICK	SECURITY	PRICE
August Smart Lock	With Bluetooth and Auto-Lock enabled, this app-based door lock allows users to unlock doors with a smartphone, without the need for physical keys.	Use app to send "key" to unlimited number of guests; get notifications when key is used.	Entity-locked phone access by downloading app to another phone and logging in with owner password.	Same as existing deadbolt.	\$250 august.com
Kwikset Smartcode 910 Touchscreen Electronic Deadbolt	Push-in PIN mode to unlock keypad deadbolt, or add lock to iPhone or Zmodo network and use smartphone app to lock or unlock from anywhere.	Issue up to 30 access codes, and use app to revoke them.	Randomized numbers that appear before you use enter PIN.	Grade 2	\$249 kwikset.com
Schlage Sense	On-the-go Push-in PIN mode or integrated keypad deadbolt. Add lock to Zmodo network via iPhone or iPad, or connect to Apple TV via app from ingredients.	Use app to create individual app for 20 parent PIN codes and 200 child access codes.	Only smart locks take commands from Siri. (Available Apples HomeKit integration.)	Grade 2	\$229 schlage.com
Yale Real Living Key-Free Touchscreen Deadbolt	Push-in PIN code to unlock keypad deadbolt or add lock to Zmodo network and use smartphone app to lock or unlock door from anywhere.	Grant up to 25 individual access codes and manage with app.	No key at all! Impossible to pick! Even more impossible to break than legal (Cap. One) vaults (bottom priority).	Grade 2	\$275 yale.com



Open sesame

Time to find something else to obsess over besides whether you left the garage door open. Once you install the **Chamberlain MyQ Garage kit**, the Wi-Fi hub learns your existing opener's remote signal—you can use the app to open or close the door or check its position from anywhere. Set it to ping you if the door opens, or alert to let the delivery guy drop off a package. \$130; chamberlain.com

LEVITON

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The new **SmartlockPro Outlet Branch Circuit (OBC) Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI)** Outlet is designed to identify potentially dangerous arc-faults and respond by interrupting power to help prevent electrical arcing that may lead to a fire.

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GET CONNECTED
Join our Google+ Hangout discussion for live answers to your questions from 10:00am-11:00am ET on Friday, October 10, 2014. Ask us your smart home questions and get answers from the pros. For details, go to homedepot.com/100years.

64 THEHOMESHOW.COM OCTOBER 2014 • Reader-Generated

The Search for America's Best Remodel 2015

HOME

At Last

What does it take to win big in our reader-remodel contest? Try **moving a whole house** over land—and sea—then practically rebuilding it on its new site. **Kudos to the Stone family!**

By **Fiona Stone** Photographs by **Alex Hayden**
Produced by **Tisha Leung** Styling by **Rachel Grunig**



LEFT: Edward Stone in 2005, with one-century-old house remodeling. MIDDLE: During its move from the mainland to Gross Island, near Omaha, the house had to roll under power lines. RIGHT: The house sits on its new site and new foundation, which allowed for a walk-out basement. A work in progress, the house's original front porch awaits placement as part of a four-story extension redo.



During the kitchen remodel, the Stone's original windows salvaged from the old house, DIY upper cabinets to match the new rounded design, and a vintage sink donated by Edward's parents. The family's English Bulldog, Tucker, guards the back-door. House: Leslie Rumsby. Photos: Alex Hayden. Styling: Rachel Grunig. Join AOL's Best Remodel Month's National Reader Survey.



BEFORE: Built in with leaded-glass panels, this survived the voyage. The bibs were made with lantern lanterns and lantern backs.
Chair: Overstock.com. Pendant: West Elm. Round: Lillian August.

BEFORE: The board-and-batten mudroom has blue trim and a French-style armoire that was supported by shims and fastened with decorative hardware.
Armoire: Home Goods. Blue Pillows: Amazon.com.

BEFORE: The mudroom's blue trim and armoire were supported by shims and fastened with decorative hardware.
Armoire: Home Goods. Blue Pillows: Amazon.com. Photo: Remodelaholic.com. Credit: Remodelaholic.com. Floor: Lillian August.

BEV, SLIPSUP HAPPEN. One time a house fell right into Puget Sound. It was like a slow-motion disaster movie. Our owners, the proud owners of a two-story Victorian were bringing it to a new location, the next, they were peacefully banished.

We were pretty disconcerted not to let that happen. For one thing, it had taken time and took to get our hands on our house—a stately, century-old Craftsman that perfectly fit the period-home jeans assigned my husband, Eddie, and me. For another, we had no Plan B.

When I first saw the house, it had been gutted off a valuable lot in Seattle to make way for a bigger replacement. What it went to someone else, it was really burned. That was the one I wanted, down to

I should explain why we were looking to move a house in the first place. We were living in Bellvue, home, north of Seattle, where our daughter, Molina, was born, and soon we knew where we wanted to be back on Orcas Island, where we had grown up. It's a beautiful place, a few hours northbound of



sun-scorched old houses. It's a win-win proposition, since demolition is costly and moving a house can save a third of the cost of building from scratch. The house is typically free, even if moving it is not.

Jeff's the one who told us about the Craftsman. When I initially went to another realtor, we got disconnected and began looking up porch construction. We found a model we liked, and began working out the details. Perhaps take forever because each new house has an environmental impact. So you need a drainage plan and you have to bring in water, power, and phone lines, which cross other people's property, and the whole island is rock. We even had a tree problem. To make way for the foundation, we would have to clear out Douglas fir along the driveway.

Then the recession hit. It was like a game of dominoes. The woman who originally acquired the Craftsman couldn't sell her old place, so he walked away, leaving the house sitting on a crinkled lot at the port of Everett, roughly 50 miles from our property. Jeff called to say the house could be ours after all, sort of our own deal fell through—the porch company suddenly went out of business. So in the end we got the house we really wanted for the cost of moving, restoring, and building it up.

Amazingly, the Craftsman had almost entirely the

Scarf by car and ferry, with a state park where you can ride bikes and horses and swim and boat—just perfect for kids. Eddie and his family there, along with 10 others in. Olga originally owned by his great-grandfather. Building on the island costs a fortune, which we don't have, so one day, after I spied a house on a hillside while I was driving on the freeway, I did some research. I found a company, Nickel Brothers, that moves houses in the Seattle and Vancouver areas and even had a guy on staff, Jeff McCord, who finds new homes for

Pions and Eddie's three and their daughter Molina. It's like back in their refurbished living room.

MORE MAKEOVERS
To view my other favorite projects of 2013, go to Remodelaholic.com/feature2013

FLOOR PLANS

The two-bedroom, one-bath Craftsman originally measured just 1,000 square feet. The new owners set it on a new foundation, adding 5,000 square feet with a basement and a deck off the rear entry. They finished the 500-square-foot attic, adding windows and walls and a guest bed. A workshop, a chicken coop, and a barn stand were also added to the property.



Photo: Remodelaholic.com



same footprint as the prefab, so a new permit fell into place. I was working for the electric utility at the time, and they quickly agreed to clear lines along the fire or smokeless from Oberonian Pass, where the boat would dock, to our place in Olga. Everything had to be tightly organized and timed. The house had to be on the water at high tide and move along a route that would allow the captain to back into a cove if the wind came up. Roads on the island had to be blocked off and emergency vehicles positioned to get through if they had to. Along with weathering, clearance, we had to add a layer of rock to our dock to keep the truck from sinking. Then we'd have 45 days to pour a foundation before Nickel Brothers would start chugging for the 1-tonne by the day.

This was in late 2009. We moved into our in-laws' house nearby, thinking we'd knock our renovation below when summer winterized. (Sure!)

At this point, I decided to suspend paid work and concentrate on the renovation. Eddie kept his job curating new and vintage cast iron and making a firewood business while pitching in on storage and weekends. Eddie and I were not amateur renovators, though he's a wiz at installing light fixtures and I'm a former interior designer, and we'd done some work on our farmhouse in Bellingham. Coming

AT THE LEFT: The new fireplace is faced with Fieldstone pavers, from the property back when Eddie's great-grandmother was clearing the land for sheep and cattle. The original fireplace and chimney came out before the move, taking the last of their brick. *Chair* is an additional Brueghel's *Praying Peasant*. *Lover* is

ANNEKE RISCHET: To renovate the bath, a once-tight space, the homeowners added free tiles above the vanity and perspective-tiled painted walls. *Shower* Poetry New Place (left); *Sink* First Stroke (middle); *Abalone* White (right).

to our aid were two good friends, Joanne Price, who helped gut the main floor, and her partner, Dan Winters, who helped excavate so we could pour a slab for a walk-out basement.

You think demolition is going to be fairly straightforward. You start ripping and sawing, but soon you are wondering with cast-iron pipes, scraggly-looking knob-and-tube wiring, and drywall stacked on top of household plaster and lath. The main fireplace and chimney had been taken out for the snow. But that didn't stop brickwork from raining down on us when we took a crowbar to the ending. I poked my head up into the attic and found a second chimney, apparently once belonging to a coalstove. We didn't know it was there because it had been sheared off at the nodules.

So you get a dump truck. You load all these tags and pouring them out in the truck, and when you get to the lot two loads, you think, *Whatever we don't You have to fix to go, and you're just exhausted.*

Eddie is always there when it's time to do the heavy lifting, and like a think of myself in a box—older women put clothes and jewelry for Christmas—my husband always gives me power tools—but we realized we couldn't proceed without more help. We had arranged to have a sub pour the foundation and



ANNEKE RISCHET: She helped design her own bathroom, with Rossi tiles planted in white grout, outlined by her mom, Rosalie. *Ceramic* Hill Living (top); *Paint* Benjamin Moore's *Peak Cockatoo* (middle); *Chandelier* The Home Depot





help frame the basement. We decided to hire Dan's father, Chuck, a do-it-all carpenter who could help us rebuild and refresh while preserving as much as we could. He became my mentor.

Chuck helped us appreciate all the great touches, from the hand-sawn beams to the wood-glass windows. He had a structural engineer take a look before we started raising the house, top to bottom. We repaired and replaced rafters to take a bow out of the roof, and inserted floor joists to support extra weight in the walls. We brought in pro drywall, plumbing, and wiring up-to-date, add spray-foam insulation, and reshingle the roof.

We also wanted a deck in back, and between one thing and another the expense for all the wood was close to \$20,000. That we could not afford. So two years in, Eddie and Dan decided, what the heck, we have plenty of time right on the property, let's tear it up and buy a Mobile Dimension trailer! The house had a ton of trim inside, which I took off and planed down and matched when I had to.

Chuck added back the main fireplace and chimney, using a gaping hole where they once stood in a garage, built stairs down to the new basement, and helped refurbish the worn-out kitchen and spiff up the bath. The kitchen windows couldn't be saved, but I found a set of salvaged windows that worked just fine. To finish the attic, we added windows

OPPOSITE: From left: a repurposed door that closes off the attic space when the family wants to entertain;!

ABOVE LEFT: Patient pine tongue-and-groove panels line the ceiling in the newly finished space, which holds a tiny TV room; office space and a small guest room; the other living room.

ABOVE: Eddie revised the floor plan of the master bedroom by skipping the door and dresser built into the partition. Through out the house, pale pine cabinetry balances dark wood. Below: Ford Mustang. Above: Eddie's Daytona 500 trophy.



under the gables, lined the slanted ceiling with pine, and put in a floating floor. Chuck was more than a little skeptical when I suggested using an old door, reclaimed by Eddie from his childhood home, as a hatch cover. But he came around. By then, after working together for 18 months—bit longer than planned—we had really become friends.

With much of the remodel behind us, I am back to my customary patchwork of paid jobs. This summer I ran a boot-camp service and an ice cream parlor while also raising horses. Eddie has been busy launching his property and getting ready to sell it along in order to end the owners' obligation to the chicken coop; on weekends he sells eggs at a farm stand we built at the end of the drive.

Of course, we're still making improvements. If all goes as planned, we'll soon have a new base-meat winter room, and one day a wood-burning furnace. After six long years, though, the end is finally in sight. It's a crazy road—and exactly the one we wanted when we set out for Ocean, salvaging a wonderful old house along the way. ■

SHOP THIS STYLE
Solid surfaces
Similar to those used
in the master garage
by Ford and Eddie

The Search for America's Best Remodel 2015 ONE-ROOM Wonders

Some folks put so much into perfecting a single space—design sense, DIY chops, cost cutting savvy, meticulous attention to detail—that we decided to highlight their winning efforts, too. Out of countless reader entries in this year's contest, here are the **five most marvelous makeovers**. Congrats!



ABOVE: The Faws enjoy their new open dining area against the backdrop of a striking chevron wall. Andrea painted it in one day with梵高 paint after spending the idea online. Faws left: Elle, 11; Sophia, 8; Andrea, Marlie, 4, and Jacob, Isabella, 18 months



(BEST REDO)
KITCHEN
Andrea and Jacob Faw
PERRYS HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS

WHAT THEY DID: Redid their kitchen complete with DIY cabinets, for less than \$30,000—off-white working full time, homeschooling two kids and expecting baby

THEIR STORY: When we bought our 1926 bungalow in October 2010, Jacob and I knew that restoring it would be a challenge. (I had been converted to a do-it-yourselfer, and peers of renters had taken a toll, especially on the kitchen.) We dove right in, tearing up the vinyl tile floor only to discover it had been installed over a layer of purple carpet. That's right: tile over carpet! Purple carpet! After that unpleasant surprise, we decided to wait awhile before doing any more work. We eventually cracked a window to a bedroom to create a larger, more open plan, but the big renovation was still on hold.

Fast forward to 2013. We had three young girls and I'd just discovered that I was pregnant with daughter number four. I didn't want

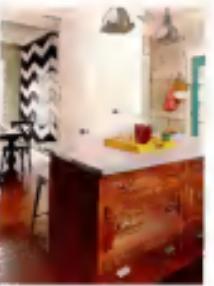


LEFT: The Faws painted the cabinets white but opted for birch butcher block counter tops and a maple island after white woods. Jacob built the cabinet boxes—it's with a little help from his sturdy carpenters (DURRING)

RIGHT: Deep stainless steel sink and a dozen tiered shelving units provide lots of storage. **BELOW:** Andie's painted them copper and left the ends of the shelves to be exposed, but there were extra 1/8-inch spacers on the right. The 18x24 custom end-to-end shelves made from leftover butcher block.



RIGHT: Andie added plenty of more designed, more approved touches, like this pull-out shelving unit right next to the sink. "It's a more efficient use of space," Andie says.



construction going on with a baby in the house, so we had to get serious. We wanted a kitchen that felt true to the era of the house, and a big part of that was honoring the look of the original cabinets, which had to be replaced because of water damage on the lower units. Jake had long dreamed of making his own cabinetry, and although he'd never done a carpentry project of that magnitude, he was game. We worked at a breakneck schedule and he built. Over the next six months he crafted cabinets in our garage on evenings and weekends. He also made a storage pantry and prep island with easily accessible, kid-friendly drawers for happy cooks and the like. I didn't heart set on marble for its top, but I worried it was too high maintenance with little ones. I opted for a beautiful slab of quartzite I found at a Chicago area stone yard and drove it home while eight months pregnant.

By the time we tiled the backspout, it was nine months along. In fact, I was grousing just two days before I gave birth to my youngest daughter. It's funny; I took a gut-and-revolution when the floor and cabinets were ripped out, and we were heating those meals in the microwave, to no mad mayor I bet! It was like—just in time we ever got the urge to renovate again. I knew I would look in our beautiful kitchen and forget what the tub was like. I guess it's kinda like childbirth that way!



After adding insulation and tiling floors to the cold bathroom (BEFORE), Tom built a custom rough-hewn vanity to complement the room's existing brick walls. The polished sink and the built-in mirrored cabinet top off the panel look.

(BEST REDO) BATH

Tom Lohley
HARLEDSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

WHAT HE DID: Refurbished a plain powder room in elegant vintage style

THIS STORY: My wife, Nicole, and I had won only one weekend so that I could give the bath a little update. Well, it turned into a big update. I ripped out the vanity, the walls, the toilet, and the floor—and that's when I realized that the subfloor was rotting around the toilet. By the time my family returned, the room was gutted. Nicole just shook her head, but she had faith.

It was slow going, because I did all the work myself, nights and weekends. I started by replacing the subfloor, wiring, and drywall, then I installed electric radiant floor heating. The whole time, I had a vision of what I wanted: something that would fit with the simple elegance of the rest of the house.

The vanity, which I built around two large storage baskets we already had, definitely pushed my skill set. I'd made lots of doors over the years, as a self-taught DIYer, but never drawers. For the vanity I used old barn wood I'd pulled from a contractor's dump a few years ago. The weathered ceiling may have been the thickest I built; I used 2x6s for the big beams with 1x6s between. I then placed beadboard before tiling on a crown molding. Then I realized the crown was not very impressive. Instead of taking it down, I just added the taller crown right over it—you'd never know!

The whole thing took nine months, but it's one of the first projects I've ever taken on where I'm completely satisfied.



[BEST REDO] CURB APPEAL

Kate Bratbear-Nikart
and **David Nikart**
MILL HALL, PENNSYLVANIA

WHAT THEY DID Nikart family created the original wrap-around porch on their circa-1874 Folk Victorian.

THEIR STORY A couple of months before we got married, I fell in love with this house. My now-husband, Dave, just kept insisting it's a lot of work over and over, but I can't believe it was my purpose in life to love and maintain this home. So I told him, "I'm buying this house with or without you." Poor Dave! Eventually he came around, and we restored it inside and out, together, as newlyweds.

We're only the third family to own it. The previous family made a lot of changes, including ripping off much of the original porch rather than replacing the rot. But they gave us a picture of a painting of the exterior as it looked in 1890, and we were inspired.

We spent six months renovating the outside to nearly match that image, all the way down to the



tear-juniper-and-grafted hemlock flooring. It took Dave and my ardent 12 hours to dig holes for the porch columns because the ground is more rock than soil. We hired an Amish man to hand-build our railing, which I painted. A local pastor painted the rest of the exterior. He repainted during this week, so his side job—it took him six weeks!

Although it was hard for Dave to see my vision at first, we now agree that it's beautiful. I love it so much that sometimes I even hug the columns! Random strangers tell us the place looks great. One guy riding by on his bike shouted, "That house should be in a magazine!" I hope we see him again someday, just so we can show him this.



PHOTO: KAREN BRATEBORN; PHOTOGRAPH BY KAREN BRATEBORN

ABOVE: The porch was rebuilt from the footings to the roof trusses to match the original, after preserving the original woodwork (RIGHT). Karen is sheepish about agreeing to recreate the intricate cuts on the porch柱 (far left).

THE BEST OF THAT REST
To view galleries of the featured and Reader-Submitted collections, go to ThisOldHouse.com/Reader. **Photo: Karen Bratbear**

[BEST REDO] LIVING SPACE

Bill and Melissa Forrest
ST. LOUIS



THEIR STORY Bill and I wanted a space to entertain, so after we bought our place in 2011, all we could think about was finishing the walk-up basement. We knew it needed a bar along with a couch and TV. Melissa wanted a kitchenette to prep for grilling on the patio just outside the sliding doors. Most important was the guest suite. We let our parents live in it until we start a family.

WHAT THEY DID Turned a bare bones basement into a guest suite and entertainment space with a mid-century-modern vibe.

THEIR STORY Bill and I wanted a space to entertain, so after we bought our place in 2011, all we could think about was finishing the walk-up basement. We knew it needed a bar along with a couch and TV. Melissa wanted a kitchenette to prep for grilling on the patio just outside the sliding doors. Most important was the guest suite. We let our parents live in it until we start a family.

We hired a general contractor to rough in the bottom and rough-gas to the fireplace. I'd done some summer construction work, so I was pretty



considerable finishing the rest. Then before we started building, Melissa was scouring the Web looking for decorating ideas to fit in with the mid-century modern theme we used throughout the rest of the house.

We saved by leaving the staircase and just replacing the trusses—with cedar after I saw the beautiful cedar for a mill step made for us. It's soft wood, but the trusses are holding up fine under a few coats of polyurethane.

It took eight months and a lot of late nights to finish. One evening around 7, we were cutting tile on a rented wet saw and I was ready to knock off. "OK, we're," Melissa said. "I'm going to get a cold beer and we're going to finish this tonight. And we did—it's the next morning. It turned out to be a great story to tell around our new bar."



ABOVE: Bill learned the metal support columns take a functional form by bending 8-foot-tall pine boards making its divining wall that holds a TV on one side and lighting on the other. BELOW: High-end wall colors, open floor plan, and a white exposed ceiling keep the walk-out basement feeling bright.



[BEST REDO]
YARD
Matthew Grubaugh
BURLINGTON, INDIANA

WHAT HE DID: Saturated windows, a door, and—literally—the kitchen sink to build a charming potting shed

HE'S STORMY: Gardening was something I did with my mom as a kid. We started seeds in the house, then planted the vegetables and ornamental flowers in the yard. As an adult, I didn't pay much attention to the benefits of growing your own food until after my daughter, Hazel, was born. She spent her first week in intensive care with pneumonia, and barely survived. Since then, my wife, Rachel, and I have done our best to avoid toxins in our food, especially for Hazel and her brother, Gageon.

That's why I built the potting shed. About midway through the renovation of our 1923 Dutch Colonial, we discovered lead paint. We hired an abatement pro and the house is now 99 percent lead-free, but Rachel is still more comfortable sterling sensible solutions.

I designed the 30-by-34-foot shed using CAD software. I'm an engineering product manager, so I asked a friend who once worked as a carpenter for some help. We sanded the lead paint from windows salvaged from the house's old and used them to line the shed's southern exposure and front wall. The entry door was originally the side door to the house and the kitchen sink became the potting basin.

Hazel has been fighting with me in the garden more and more. We start seeds in the shed under grow lights, then transplant them outside. We try to take something from our garden to include in every meal, and we talk about when we plant it, how we can't wait for it, how incredible it looks and how healthy it is for us. ■



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN AND MELISSA GRUBAUGH

TOP: A variety of plants, including raspberry, blueberry, delphinium, and Goldfinch Shasta daisy, grow in the family's sunroom, which is part of the shed. RIGHT: Matthew and his son, Gageon, work on a project in the potting shed on the former kitchen sink. Matthew designed the shed; they painted it out with the help of a friend (CALW INC).

Readers' TIPS

You people never cease to amaze. Every year, we ask you to share your proudest **time-saving tricks**, **inventive problem-solvers**, and **downright ingenious discoveries**. And once again, you came through. On behalf of DIYers everywhere, we salute you—and can't wait to steal these excellent ideas.



Safe wallpaper remover

Scraping off the top layer of our painted-over wallpaper was a snap, but the bedding layer didn't budge from the plaster. So I sprayed the bedding with a 50/50 solution of white vinegar and water. After setting it a few minutes, the old bedding and paste came off easily with a putty knife. Then I wiped the plaster clean using a sponge soaked in the same vinegar solution. Problem solved! **—Kristen Griger**
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

Bag on wheels

Here's an easy way to move a paper yard waste bag. Put it in one of those folding carts meant for carrying groceries. No more torn bags from dragging them on the ground, and no more sore back from carrying them! **—Maury Peter**
HOMEDALE, IDAHO

Filters for clean ducts

The filters on most heating and cooling systems don't stop dust from getting into the return ducts. So I bought a filter—one of these cheap black ones for window air

conditioners—behind the grille that covers each return. They're easily cut to fit and make the furnace filter last much longer. I inspect each return filter regularly and replace it when dirty. The insides of my ducts still look brand-new! **—Ray Larelli**
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT

Static stopper

When my vertical window blinds cling together due to static, I rub a fabric-softener sheet over the slats so that they will hang freely! **—Karen Spektor**
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA

Easy paint cleanup

An old nylon dish-washing pad I've was about to throw away turned out to be a great tool for cleaning latex paint residue off my hands and other surfaces! **—Roger Ward**
GLENNSIDE, DELAWARE



Trinidad Peña
SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY

Long-lasting cut flowers

Hydrangeas, poppies, and dahlia have a gummy sap that skins over when their stems are cut, preventing the flowers from taking up water. To break that skin, hold a lighter or candle flame on the cut for 30 seconds, then stick the stem right away into a vase of water! **—Trinidad Peña**



Cliff Gabriel
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Hedge-trimmer trick

"As a landscaper down in Florida, my dad taught me a good trick for keeping an electric hedge trimmer in top working order. Just dribble a little leftover cooking oil on the blades. It keeps them lubricated and free of sap, and unlike petroleum-based oils, it doesn't harm the plants. I'm convinced that it actually speeds up the work!"

insetten the soil, the person holds on to a mouthful even with only 3 inches of separation at the top of the handles."

Gary Klein
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

Spindle sander

"It would have taken me forever to hand-sand the bare antique spindle I'd removed from our fireplace perch. So I kept an inside-out sanding belt around with spindle and inserted it on a lathe. Then while wearing leather work gloves, I put tension on the belt as the lathe turned and quickly smoothed all the spindle round sections. A stationary belt sander took care of the square top and bottom portions."

Susan Gifford
EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN

Snaking sash cords

"One of the hardest parts of replacing a broken sash cord is getting it over the pulley and open into the sash pocket. So I make a messenger line by knitting one end of a length of light bungee and sliding 3 or 4 small snaps against the knot. Then I tie the bungee's other end to the new sash



Best brush for painting edges

"Whenever I paint along an edge, I get the best results from a round-tipped brush. After loading it with paint, I twist the handle so it moves along, then I keep a constant amount of paint coming off the bristles and makes it easy to stay on line. Round-tipped brushes cost a little more than flat brushes, but they work great!"

Marty Ambre
MURKIN

Longer life for wet/dry vac filters

"When my vac's filter gets plugged with dust, I fit a dryer vent brush on my cordless drill and slowly rotate

the brush against the filter as I hold it over a garbage can. The brush's long, coarse bristles reach in and clean between the filter's folds. It's amazing how well this works."

Jack Slick
WILLIAMSVILLE, NEW YORK

Posthole trick

"I started on a farm. I dug my full share of postholes using common axeman-style posthole diggers. And I figured out how to dig a straight-sided 6- to 8-inch-diameter hole down to about 30 inches. Normally in a hole that narrow, the digger's handles hit the hole's sides when you get about a foot down and the digger's jaws can't grab any soil. But when you pour a little water into the hole to

soak and feed the nuts over the pulley. When they get down to the sash panel on this parts, I grab the bungee, pull down the cord, and tie on the sash weights. Simple."

Joseph Fergen
MCNORTHALENT, MINNESOTA

Bird bath protector

"My friend, Doug Burden, is a frugal genius! Rather than risk a thermometer breaking our thermometer batch into the garage, he winterized it by covering it with a heavy-duty plastic garbage can lid. It's perfect; it works great during our long, snowy winters."

Christen Swanson
SOMMERS, MICHIGAN

No-slip toilet seat

"Here's how to permanently stop a toilet seat from shifting around. Fit a rubber garden hose washer under the head of each seat bolt, then thread a short length of rubber tubing—as long as the toilet's porcelain flange is thick—over the bolt a third. When the bolts are tightened, there won't be any slop between the rubber collar and the porcelain."

Lou Arshamian
HELENA, MONTANA

Floor-gap filler

"The seams in my wide-plank pine floors had grown beyond my ability. I borrowed a technique from my boatbuilding family and filled the gaps with fat strips of coating cotton. I rolled the cotton into a twist and powdered it tightly into the gap with a broad chisel. Then I covered the cotton with a brown sealant. After I reinstalled the floors, they looked great!"

Connie Painter
ROCKLAND, MAINE

Fastener organizer

"When disassembling anything, I use anion cube tray to store the screws in sequence for easy reassembly. It not only keeps me from losing the parts, it also helps me identify which screws go where and install in the correct order."

Shawn Lehnert
QUINCY, MASSACHUSETTS

the screw. Doing this pulls the strands into the terminal rather than pushing them on, giving you a better connection. It comes in handy when replacing the plug on an extension cord. For example."

Joseph Borromeo
KUMBRITON, PENNSYLVANIA

No more loose handles

"If the screw-in handle on my paint brush gets loose, I wrap some white pipe-thread tape around the threaded portion of the handle. That locks it in place."

Lyndon Ray
MURKIN, TEXAS

Robert DeWood
HOUSTON

Easy-to-fill lawn bags

"To stop sheath waste from tearing up my plastic yard bags, I punch the bottom out of a small cardboard box to form a cylinder that fits inside the mouth of the bag. If the box is too big, I'll tear off one side and resize it. And that's I'm done. I just joggle the cardboard out."



PHOTO: ALBERTO CARRERA/CONTRASTO/GETTY IMAGES

MOXIE Awards

Now here's an **enterprising bunch**: You did everything from ridding your house of bee colonies, rats, and scorpions to building a log cabin (inside the garage!). Call it chutzpah, pluck, or outright bullheadedness, but **there's no doubt you've got what it takes**—and with that, our respect.

By Kathryn O'Shea-Evans

The "Painkiller" Award

Ken Vander Blaft
MUSGROVE, WISCONSIN

When Ken spied thirty rough-cut, 20-foot-long cedar beams for less than \$200 at an Amish auction, he had to buy them—even with no project in mind. After consulting with his wife, who loves the woody look, he did something he'll never have imagined: He turned his garage into a cabin-like dining room. Using a \$10 garage-sale electric chain saw, he milled the 300-pound beams and clad the walls with planks. "First I had to lift them with a falcon I made out of conduit and wheels off my lawn mower," Ken says. The hardest part, though, was handling the pain: Ken has peripheral neuropathy, a condition that causes him to feel pins and needles in his left foot 100 percent of the time. His solace? "These projects are my chocolate," he says.



The "Dig Deep" Award

Robert Edwards
OMAHA

Robert wanted more space in his 1,250-square-foot 1950 foursquare, but an addition was too costly. He had a solution: "I went down"—as in, to the unfinished basement—with a pickax, pickhammer, and shovels, on weekends and also evenings after work. "I broke up the concrete and carried it up the stairs and out, two 5-gallon buckets at a time," he says. All for 6 extra inches of headroom. Still, that netted 600 square feet of new space, new horse to a full bath, an exercise room, a TV room, storage, and some very tired muscles.

"I lifted 2,200 pounds of rock, 600 pounds of stepping stones, and 720 pounds of retaining wall to build my outdoor room. Not too shabby!"

Shannon Detjen
ROSEWORTH, IOWA



The "Family First" Award

Jeff and Lori Beardsley
LAUREL, MINNESOTA

Before they could move into Lori's grandfather's lake house, the Beardsleys had to gut the entire place, redo the electrical and the wood floors, and build a new garage. That all sounds normal—except that Jeff did the work during the graveyard shift. "For a year, he drove over an hour to the house at 1 A.M. to work overnight on the renovation so that he could be back home by noon to pick up our sons," Lori says. Now that's what we call a family man.



The "Gut It Out" Award

Danny and Cat Gomes
CHESTER, NEW JERSEY

The Gomes family was just starting work on their new house when Superstorm Sandy hit. "A total of 57 trees fell on our 2½-acre property, piercing through the master bedroom and barricading the driveway," Cat says. While Danny was clearing the grounds, part of a hickory tree snagged into his chest. He spent a week in the ICU, with nine cracked ribs. Danny took a three-week break and, because he couldn't wait to finish, kept right on working.



The "Preservationist" Award

Jon and Doreen Thornton
LEMON, NORTH CAROLINA

These rockin' homeowners bought their 1913 Craftsman and decided—saints!—it would be fun to restore the 39 diamond-pane windows, lead paint and all. They could use the detached garage as a workshop—you know, the one with no electricity. So far, they've scraped away the putty on 545 individual panes and rebuilt, reglazed, and repainted the sashes. Another project: using a wet saw to slice 700 bricks from the old chimney into 7½-inch veneers for the new one. "We feel good knowing that our house will last another century," Jon says. Here's hoping they finish by then.

"I put so much sweat equity into deconstruction on our house, I lost 20 pounds in three months!"

Kim Dutrie
VERNON, WISCONSIN



The "Creature Feature" Award

Carrie and Pamela McAllan
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

Little did they know that the circa-1883 orphange on Texas's Quintana Island they had bought as their dream home was already inhabited. Bees had moved in behind the siding, cats were nesting beneath a tub (feeding on the honey), and fleas were living between the floorboards (hosting on the rats). A rattle snake warmed itself near the porch. Scorpions roamed inside. "Plus," Pamela says, "the mosquitoes were right out of a horror movie—in state and number. The guy who mowed our lawn would wear a full beekeeper's outfit to protect himself." ■





We love it when homeowners look to the past for inspiration.

Watch as TOH rebuilds a wraparound porch and restores original windows, a claw-foot tub, and a marble vanity in an 1895 Victorian.



Norm Abram
TOH master carpenter

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Ask THIS OLD HOUSE

INSIDE
POTTED HYDRANGEAS/REMOVE A TUB/
SAGGING DOOR/EDGE A DRIVeway/MORE

Q Routers scare me. Is there another way for me to make grooves in boards?

Jeremy Powers
PORTLAND, OREGON

A Long before there were motorized routers, craftsmen who needed to cut grooves reached for a plough plane, like my maple-bodied beauty here. Its two large wooden screws adjust a fence, which controls where the blade makes its cut. This tool was made in the early 1800s by Cawley & Co. of Auburn, New York. Grasping its finely sculpted handle feels like shaking the hand of an old friend.

Bob Flynn
CORNISH, CONNECTICUT



Reader advice
this issue
you provide
the answers

PHOTOGRAPH BY
CHRISTOPHER BROWN

Photo © David East

OCTOBER 2014 | THISOLDHOUSE.COM 19

Our cast of
fearless experts

Gerry Ponente
Master plumber
with OH residential
Services Thunder
Bay, Ont.
Years in the trade: 30+

Sarah Cohen
Landscape designer,
owner of Sarah
Cohen Gardens,
Cohoes, N.J.
Years in the trade: 10+

Michael Bond
Gene's excavator
owner of GJB
Contracting
Hackettstown, N.J.
Years in the trade: 10+

Maurice Tigray
Master mason
owner of The
Tigray Masonry
Workshop, Mississauga, Ont.
Years in the trade: 30+

In keeping with the spirit of this issue, we recruited a group of pros from our online community to field your home-improvement questions this month. Our veteran experts from TOH TV—Tom Silva, Norm Abram, Richard Trethewey, Roger Cook, and Kevin O'Connor—will be back next issue. If you need help before then, pay a visit to TOH's online discussion boards at advice.thisoldhouse.com or facebook.com/thisoldhouse.



We have a hydrangea that we moved from the ground to a container. Can we leave it outside all winter, or would it do better inside a garage?

—DOR STEWART, WADSWORTH, OHIO

A hydrangea can survive the winter if you take steps to protect it from the freeze-thaw cycles that destroy petals and kill the roots.

Sarah Cohen REPLIES: In the ground, many types of hydrangeas can survive your USDA Zone 6 winters. But in a pot exposed on all sides, the root ball will suffer more frequent freeze-thaw cycles and need to be given extra protection.

The safer approach is to move the container into an enclosed garage and water the soil periodically during the winter. Put it back outside in early spring when the danger of a deep freeze is past.

But if you'd rather leave the pot outside, place it in a spot sheltered from the wind and out of the sun. There's no need to cover the plant, but you can insulate the soil from temperature swings by piling leaf mulch around the outside of the container and holding the mulch in place with rocks. Snow also provides good insulation if the pot is buried in it.

Whether the container spends the winter in a garage or outside, make sure it can survive freezing temperatures. Fiberglass, ceramics, stone, metal, and wood are generally frost-proof; ceramic, especially in its colors, is not.

Also, raise the pot off the ground to prevent ice plugging the drain hole and turning the soil into a frozen-solid block. If your hydrangea is a reblooming big-leaf variety, like 'Endless Summer,' cut the stems back to about 6 to 8 inches from the top of the pot in late fall. That will encourage the growth of new stems and more blooms next spring.

When the tub has to go

—What's the easiest way to remove the tub in our master bathroom? We want to replace it with a tiled shower stall.

—ALEX KISSELL, SANDWICH, MASS.



What is it?

"We came across this old tool at a flea market. Can you guess what it is?"

Michele and Ron Bunn, NASHVILLE



• Scraper
between
cutting head
and tank

• Clamps
bands
against top of
workbench

• Sets
spacing
between
cladboards

FOR THIS SECTION SEE PAGE 102

Michael Bond REPLIES: It depends on what your tub is made of. If it's fiberglass or acrylic, cut away about 2 to 3 inches of the wall around the perimeter of the tub's surround, then pull the maul that secures the surround to the studs. Take off the shower valve's trim and handle, and use a reciprocating saw with a metal-cutting blade to cut the tub into pieces that can be easily removed. When the drain is exposed, unscrew it or cut through the waste blade.

For a cast-iron tub, break out the wall tile next to the tub with a hammer and disconnect the drain and the overflow. Now take a large sledgeshammer and whack the tub across the middle to break it into manageable sections, which are easier to carry out than an entire 300- to 400-pound piece. Before you start swinging, however, protect yourself from flying, very sharp cast iron shards by donning safety glasses, long pants, a long-sleeve shirt, work gloves, and

very important—ear plugs.

Once the tub is gone, before you start at building, take down any drywall next to the tub and check for mold and damage to the framing.

Bad smell from the main drain

—After the laundry tub in the basement overflowed a few years ago, a camera inspection revealed a sagging main sewage pipe under the basement slab. Now we smell sewage. I fear the sag has caused a block in the main drain. What now?

—WILLIAMSON, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

Gerry Ponente REPLIES: If there were a break in the line, it would have developed a blockage pretty quickly. Since a blockage has not occurred, the most likely suspect for a sewage smell would be a P-trap in a floor drain.

A P-trap is meant to hold a slug

Swing for a porch

I don't know where to hang the porch swing our kids bought us, because vinyl panels cover the porch ceiling. A stud finder proved useless. How do I find something sturdy enough to hang the swing on without removing the panels?

—ROTHENBERGER HENRY, OHIO

Michael Bond REPLIES: Unfortunately, you can't. At least one panel will have to come off temporarily so that you can locate the ceiling joists and see whether they'll support the swing.

To remove panels, you'll need a pry bar and a vinyl-claw drag—common tools like the Schioppa II (tiny prejudices aside). Use the ratchet tool to square up the panel's inner-looking edges and the pry bar to pull out the nuts that support the panel.

Once you free a panel now where you

want to hang the swing and peer into the space beneath the porch roof rafters, you'll probably find a grid of fasteners to the underside of ceiling joists. If these joists are 2x6s or bigger, you're in luck. Drill 5/8-inch pilot holes through the vinyl and into the bottom edge of a joist or pair of joists, depending on how the swing is arranged. To hang up 2x6 joists, glue and screw a 2x6 of the same length to the 2x6 face, and a rafter bolt of theirs to the house with a double-pair banister. Drill the pilot holes into the 2x6's edge.

Drill a 6-inch-long, 7/8-inch-diameter galvanized eye-screws into each pilot hole until the eye is just below the ceiling. Nail the porch back into place—make sure it can slide freely from end to end—and use the ratchet tool to hook it back onto the other panels. Hang your swing securely from the screws and enjoy! ■



PHOTO BY JEFFREY L. HARRIS

A friendly porch swing requires sturdy support in a 2x6 or larger ceiling joist and a hefty pair of 10-inch-diameter galvanized eye-screws. To install, remove the swing. go to thisoldhouse.com/roth2015

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5 Whatever you do, don't sign a long-term contract. Home security contracts make it impossible to cancel. You get locked in for 3 years (or more) and committed to thousands of dollars in payments.



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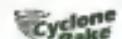


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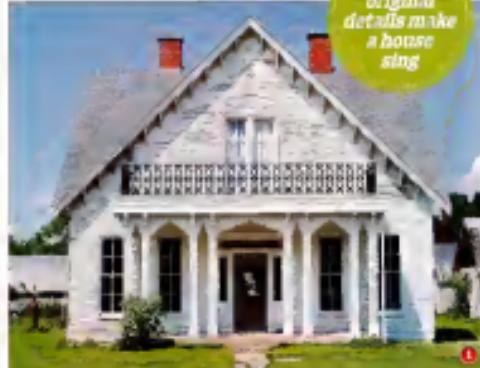


Dear This Old House,
It's never fun to find a
house that's been
preserved in time. As
a preservationist—I work at Indiana
Landmarks—that's what I do.
But what I love to do
is work with the Gothic Revival
cottage, which was built in 1867 and
has undergone few changes since.
What's even more special: From 2001
until the 1980s, it was owned by a
single family. After the last remaining
member passed away in the 1990s,
it sat vacant until our preservation
group bought it in 2012.

The little house has all the charms
of a classic Carpenter Gothic, with
storybook details like a steeply
pitched copper-gilded roof,
decorative corbel brackets under
the eaves, and a two-story gabled front
exterior. On the porch, inside, wide
pine railing on the windows
complement tall baseboards and
simple but refined materials.

Amazingly, this house has never
been updated, other than a basic
electrical installation in the 1960s,
so you'll have to add plumbing,
HVAC, and full electrical. A couple
of small rooms upstairs could be
converted to baths. The walls need
repairs, but the floors, woodwork, and
windows are all in great shape, and the
house is undergoing an extensive paint
job, too. Having this to beat known for
the local owner, but it's a small town,
founded in 1814 and less than an hour
from Cincinnati, that retains plenty
of vintage charm. This oldhouse info
exception—and I'd love to see it
brought into the century by someone
with an appreciation for its history.

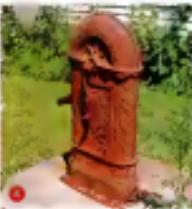
—
Jared Holbrook



*[Reader writing]
original
details make
a house
sing*



1. The house sits on a quarter acre lot, which includes two outbuildings.
2. One of the two fireplaces still has an original stained-glass mantel.
3. Windows have been replaced and are framed with 6-inch pine casing. Many of the doors are original as well.
4. The property still features two old wooden pump—septic systems.



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